

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1878.

Within the Precincts.

CHAPTER VII.
A NEW LIGHT.



power were so manifold, he began the next story—and so on till all was finished. It took some time to get through the delightful pennyworth. What good it did to the poor girls at their work! They were not patient, superior, noble-minded needlewomen, pensively bearing up against the privations of their lot, but very commonplace girls, grumbling at their

It was late before Law got home. In the first place he read the *Family Herald* through to his interested and busy auditors. Their needles flew like lightning along the lengthy seams: trimmings were as nothing to them, and even a hem became interesting as he read. When he had pursued Lady Araminta to the end of this little portion of her history, showing how she refused that wicked Duke who was at the bottom of all her troubles, and whose expedients to get her into his

privations frankly, yet sitting up half the night over wedding finery or funeral robes, without any very clear idea that it was a hardship, or indeed more than an inevitable feature of "the dressmaking." It was under this simple matter-of-fact aspect that their vigil appeared to them now, and they did not feel it any very great grievance; but, such as it was, it was infinitely lightened by Law and the *Family Herald*. He was, to tell the truth, a little bit interested himself in the stories. He thought them very finely written. He liked the bits about Araminta's true, but alas! poor and unfortunate lover. This lover was tall and strong, interesting and clever beyond description. He could do whatever he tried to do, and managed to live comfortably upon nothing at all. Law had a half notion that this elegant and perfect being was like himself. He would not have breathed it to anyone, but yet he thought so. And when one story was finished he began another. He did not mind whether it was the beginning, or the middle, or the end of the tale; all was the same to Law; he went stoutly on, and read the whole number through—poetry, answers to correspondents, and all. It was not very fine literature perhaps, or, rather, it was very superfine literature, with nobody below the rank of a baronet in the leading stories; but what it did for these poor dressmaking girls! They followed Lady Araminta through every turn of her wonderful fortunes, with eyes that glowed and shone over their needlework. They identified themselves with her, exclaiming, "That's just what I'd have done!" and, "No, I wouldn't have had him, not I, if he'd been fifty dukes!" with true enthusiasm. Their needles flew, and the work got on as by magic; their excitement showing itself in the speed with which they worked. The wedding things were done an hour sooner than they would otherwise have been done, under this stimulus, and it was little more than twelve o'clock when Polly, after folding up the last dress, in readiness to be sent home first thing in the morning, said, "Now, Mr. Lawrence, you've been a deal of use. If you like, you can see me home!"

"As if it was a treat for him to see her home!" Emma cried, who owned the special allegiance of Law; but the youth for his part had no objection. It was a beautiful night, and a little additional walk was nothing but a pleasure to him; and he was quite good-natured, ready to exert himself in any way that was not legitimate and necessary. Emma, indeed, did not smile upon this undertaking. She (who had been obliged to do as much before now without anyone to take care of her) did not see what Polly wanted with an escort in a quiet place like St. Michael's. "You'll meet nobody worse than the policeman," she said.

"Policemen are bad enough, sometimes," said Polly.

"Mind you don't meet the Captain," said Emma's elder sister, "and get him into trouble with his papa."

At this Polly laughed, tossing her head with its innumerable plaits and puffs. "I hope I can manage the Captain," she said. And whoever had heard the style of Polly's conversation as she walked up the

sweep of the steep street by Law's side, with the soft night air blowing in their faces, would have recognised at once the superiority of Polly to all the insinuations addressed to her. All was very quiet in the High Street of St. Michael's: they met nobody worse than the policeman, as Emma had suggested; and everything was still and dark, except the stars shining far away overhead; for the shop-windows had long been closed, and the lamps glimmered few and far between.

"You mustn't think anything of what these foolish things say about the Captain," said Polly; "because I'm a bit more reasonable than the rest, he likes to have a chat with me now and again. He's a very well-informed man, is your papa; but you mustn't think nothing of what they say——"

"Oh, I don't!" said Law, with the serenest confidence; "I know the governor's way."

This, however, was not a reply which pleased Polly. "What do you mean by the governor's way?" she cried sharply. "You are not half respectful enough, if you would like to hear my opinion. You shouldn't talk of the Captain like that; he's a fine man, and he's one that many in this town thinks a deal of."

"Is he really?" said Law, in genuine surprise; "I did not know that. I wonder what kind of people they are? Is it far off where you live, Polly? I haven't got a latch-key, so I don't want to be very late."

"You never thought of being late so long as you were sitting by Emma; though what you can see in a little white-haired thing like that, like a white cat! You haven't got a latch-key? I should think not at your age. Mr. Lawrence, take my advice, and never be so late out of bed unless there is a very good reason for it."

"I like that!" cried Law, "when it was you that kept me there all the time."

"I thought it would do you good," said Polly. "I am almost sure you had not done a thing besides, or looked into a book for the whole day."

"Oh! I should not mind standing an examination in the *Family Herald*," Law said with a laugh. He had occupied the post of reader in the workroom before, and knew a great deal about Lady Araminta. There could not be any doubt that he was very good-natured, and ready to make himself of use.

"I should like to know," said Polly—and though he could scarcely see her face, Law felt, with a mixture of amusement and indignation, by the sound of her voice, that Polly, too, meant to give him good advice—"I should like to know, Mr. Lawrence, what you intend to be? Are you going into the army, like the Captain? If I were a young gentleman, that's what I should choose above everything."

"I can't afford the army, worse luck," cried Law; "we haven't got any money, and a fellow can't live on his pay. And there's those dash'd examinations to pass everywhere before you can get into anything; it's enough to drive a man out of his senses. I sometimes think

I shall emigrate—that's the only thing you can do without an examination."

"But you can't do that without money—a little money at least," said Polly. "If I were you, I should make a push and get in somewhere. I can't think how you can stay at home doing nothing, a great strong young man like you."

"Oh! as for being strong, that don't do much for an exam.," said Law. "The little fellows stand the best chance there."

"I wouldn't make jokes about it, if I were you. I wonder how you can go on living on the Captain, and such a burden on him—both you and your sister——"

"Hallo," said Law in extreme surprise. The mention of Lottie bewildered him. He was not even angry for the moment—he was so profoundly astonished.

"Yes, indeed, you and your sister too. You don't show any consideration for the Captain, and how can you expect that he's always to be thinking of you? The Captain is a young man still, and he is a fine man, and if he were to marry again, as would be very natural at his age, where would you and Miss Despard be?"

"Let my sister alone if you please," said Law, with a momentary flash of anger; and then he relapsed into a laugh. "The governor should be much obliged to you, Polly, for taking his part."

"Somebody ought to take his part," said Polly. "I don't suppose he's much over fifty—what I call quite a young man still; and why should he deny himself and spend all he's got on two grown-up young people that ought to be making their own living? A man like the Captain, he wants his ease and his little comforts and a wife to look after him—that's what he wants. He ain't an old man to give in to his family. If I were to put upon my folks like that, do you think I'd be walking up St. Michael's Hill at this hour of the night, after slaving and stitching all day? Not a bit of it, Mr. Lawrence. If I were to do as you're doing, I might sit at home and make myself comfortable; but I was always one for being independent, and as for the Captain, poor dear! he oughtn't to be spending his money upon them that can do for themselves. It is himself he ought to be thinking of, to get all the pleasure he can as long as he's able to enjoy it. And if he were to marry again, as there's nothing more likely, where would you and Miss Lottie be? Oh yes, I know your names quite well," said Polly. "We often talk about you. These sort of names for short are a mistake. For instance, me, my name's Maria, that's a very ladylike name; but what does it matter when everybody calls me Polly? but, if my name's common, nobody can say of me that I don't behave handsome to my parents," Polly said with emphasis. As for Law, he had felt himself growing hot and cold all through this speech. It plunged him into an entirely new world of thought. He tried to laugh, but there was no laughter in his mind.

"It is very kind of you, Polly," he said, with scorn in his voice, "to take the trouble to give me so much good advice."

"Oh, I assure you it's not for your sake, but the Captain's," said Polly. "I told him if ever I had a chance with either of you, you should hear a bit of my mind—and I saw my opportunity to-night—that's why I asked you to come with me, Mr. Lawrence. Oh, it wasn't for the pleasure of your society! I told the Captain I'd give you a bit of my mind. This is my home, so I'll bid you good-night, and I hope you'll lay to heart what I say."

Law turned up the Abbey Hill when thus dismissed with much secret excitement in his mind. It was altogether a new idea to him that his father was, as Polly said, quite a young man still, and that it was on himself, not on his grown-up children, that his money should be spent. Law had never looked upon the income of the family as belonging exclusively to his father. It was the family income, and it had seemed to him that he had just as good a right to have everything he wanted as his father had. As a matter of fact, he did not get all he wanted, as Captain Despard managed to do; but that was because his father had the command of everything, not that he had a better right to it than Law. The idea that he had no right at all, as Polly seemed to think, and that his father might make the home untenable by marrying somebody, perhaps Polly herself, struck him as the most extraordinary of revelations. It was too extraordinary to be thought of calmly—his brain boiled and bubbled with the extraordinariness and novelty of the thought. The governor, who was only not an old fogey because he was so much less respectable, less orderly than old fogeys ought to be!—Law could not associate his father's image with the idea of, even, comparative youth. But he could not dismiss the suggestion from his mind. He tried to laugh, but something seemed to hang over him like a threat, like a cloud of evil omen. He walked quickly up the slope to the Abbey gate, trying to shake off the uneasy feeling in his mind—trying to postpone at least the new idea which he could not get rid of. When, however, Law had got into the Precincts he saw a passenger not much less active and considerably more jaunty than himself on the way before him, walking with a slight occasional lurch, up the pavement to the Lodges. The lurch was quite slight, and might not have been noticed by an indifferent eye, but Law noted it with the jealous observation of one whose own credit was at stake. It was hard upon a fellow, he thought, that his father should be seen going home night after night with a lurch in his walk, and that his name should be recognised in all the lowest quarters of the town as that of "the Captain's son." Why should he suffer for such a cause? Other old men were respectable, were no shame to their sons, but on the contrary furnished a margin of honour and reputation upon which to draw when there was occasion; but this was not the case with Captain Despard. Other old men—but there suddenly flashed across Law's mind as he instinctively placed his father

in this class, a recollection of the words which had just been said to him—"He is what I call a young man still." Pricked by this thought, he looked at the figure before him with eyes suddenly cleared from the mists of habit and tradition, and saw it in an altogether new light. Captain Despard was straight and active, he carried his head high, and his step, though to-night slightly irregular, was both firm and light. To see him walking in front humming and whistling by turns, perhaps with a certain bravado to show how steady he was, gave Law the most uncomfortable sensation. It was true what Polly had said. This was no old fogey, no heavy father; though up to this moment Law had looked upon the Captain in no other light. He felt a shiver come over him, a sudden realization of all the possibilities. Who should say that the governor ought not to do what he liked best, whatever that might be! Law felt conscious that he himself, who was so much younger, did what he liked in indifference to everybody's opinion, and he was under no affectionate delusion as to the superior virtue of his father. What if Polly were right? Polly perhaps had a better chance of knowing the Captain's wishes than either his son or his daughter, to whom he was not likely to talk on such subjects. A chill came over the lad though the night was so warm. Life had always seemed sure enough to him, though it had its privations. He had to put up with that chronic want of pocket money—and with frequent "rows" from his father, and passionate remonstrances from Lottie. These were the drawbacks of existence; but Law was aware that, except in very favourable circumstances indeed, as when you were born a duke, or at least born to the possession of five thousand a year or so, existence was very seldom without drawbacks; this, however, was very much worse than the want of pocket money; the governor with a new wife, perhaps Polly! The situation was too horrible to be realised, but for the moment the idea seemed to pour a current of ice into Law's veins.

He had no latch-key, but as soon as he saw his father he made up his mind to take advantage of Captain Despard's entrance in a way which he had found practicable before this. Light and swift as he was, when the Captain had fumbled and opened the door, Law stole close behind him and entered with him in the darkness. "What's that?" Captain Despard growled, feeling the movement of the air as his son passed. "I'll swear there's a ghost in this house," he added, grumbling to himself. Law, however, was safely out of the way before his father managed to strike a light, and went, swaying from side to side, up the narrow staircase which creaked under him. The young fellow, standing back in the darkness, saw Captain Despard's face illuminated by the light of the candle he carried, and gazed at it with eyes sharpened by anxiety. It was a handsome face—the contour still perfect, the hair crisp and curling, a heavy military moustache shadowing the well-formed lip. The Captain was flushed, his eyes were blinking, half-closed, and that unloveliest look that can be seen on a man's face, the look of partial intoxication approaching the

sleepy stage, took all spirit and sentiment from him. Yet Law could not but acknowledge that his father was a handsome man. He stood quite still, watching that progress upstairs, half because he was unwilling to be seen, half because he was anxious to see. Captain Despard was "a fine man," as Polly had said. Law could see now, looking at him between the bars of the railing which guarded the little staircase, that there was nothing in common between him and the old white-haired Chevaliers, old men not strong enough to be warlike, but courteous and gentle as becomes old soldiers, who sunned themselves on the pavement before the Lodges. Captain Despard, middle-aged and self-assertive, was as different as possible from those old gentlemen with their honourable scars. He had none of their honours nor of the grace of old service; but he was strong in life and vigour, a kind of superiority which Law could appreciate. A grain of pride mingled in the exasperation with which he acknowledged this to himself—and yet he was not only exasperated but alarmed. He retired to bed very softly afterwards, creeping on tiptoe and in the dark up the stairs. There was still a gleam of light under Lottie's door, but Law preferred not to direct his sister's attention to the late hour of his own return by going straight to her room to relieve himself of his trouble. He did not want to be forced into confidences or to betray where he had himself been, and how he had heard the alarming prophecies which had so suddenly cleared his sight; and though the temptation was great he resisted it. Thus the lights were burning all at once in three of the little rooms in Captain Despard's house, each illuminating a separate world of excitement, unsuspected by the others. The Captain's share of the disturbance was less of the mind than the body. He had lost some money which he could not afford to lose, and was annoyed on this account; and he was excited, but more sleepy, on account of the potations which had accompanied his play. "By —, I'll have it back to-morrow night—luck can't be so against me one night after another." This was the only burden of his simple and uncomplicated reflections. He thought nothing of his children one way or another. Both his children, however, though in different ways, were thinking of him. Lottie, though she dared not openly sit up for her father; remained up in her own room until he came in, and she had made sure that he did not want anything, and was not likely to set the house on fire. But Law's reflections were more serious than those of the other two. It seemed to the idle lad as if suddenly a real burden had got on to his shoulders. He was thoroughly frightened out of the pleasant calm of nature—the sense that everything must go on as everything had gone since he could remember. In later days, indeed, things had gone better for Law—Lottie had managed now and then to scrape a shilling or two off the housekeeping to give him, and of late she had not bullied him quite so much as usual. The current had been flowing more evenly—everything had conspired to make the happy-go-lucky of his life more smooth than before. He woke up with all the more fright and surprise to the sudden danger now.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRIUMPH AND TERROR.

LOTTIE had gone home that night, it need not be said, with her head full of excitement. Had she not good reason to look upon this evening as of importance in her life? She had met the man who, before he had ever spoken to her, had, according to all appearances, placed her on the highest pinnacle on which a girl can be placed—the throne of a romantic love. Though it had been a temporary downfall to her to be placed in the charge of Mr. Ashford and the Signor, instead of crossing the Dean's Walk in the company of this secret and poetical lover, yet she was almost glad to be thus let drop into quietness, to avert any word or look too much, which might have spoiled the visionary elevation on which she felt herself. Yes, she was glad that they had never been alone. Had he whispered an avowal of any kind into her ear, she was not, she knew, prepared for it; Lottie was honest even in her self-delusion, and she knew that, however profoundly to her advantage it might be, she could not make any response to a man whom she did not know, whom she was speaking to for the first time, notwithstanding her consciousness that he must have been thinking of her for a long time. She could not have made any fit reply. She must have said something which probably would have hurt him in the fervour of his romantic passion; for, though grateful to him and romantically touched by his evident devotion, Lottie could not have persuaded herself that he was anything to her except a delightful wonder and most flattering novelty. No, it was better, much better, that he did not come; she must have hurt his feelings, discouraged him, probably driven him away from her; and she was very far from wishing to drive him away. Lottie thought, with an innocent calculation, if she saw a little more of him, had a little time given her to make his acquaintance, that probably she would come to love him quite naturally and spontaneously; but at present it was not possible that she could do so, and she felt a natural shrinking from any premature disclosure of his feelings. Thus it was evidently most fortunate that the Dean had interposed, that Rollo had not been allowed to come home with her—fortunate, and yet a little disappointing too. There had been very few words exchanged with her companions as they crossed the Dean's Walk. Mr. Ashford had most kindly and courteously reminded her that she had expressed a wish to speak to him about something. "It is too late now to ask what it was," he said; "I must not keep you out of doors at this hour; but if you will permit me, I will call and inquire in what way I can be of use to you?" "You know in what way *I* would like to be of use to you, Miss Despard," the Signor said on the other side. All this was very flattering, even though she might be displeased by the Signor's reiteration of his disagreeable offer. She made him a curtsy like Lady Caroline, while to the Minor Canon she gave her hand, which

perhaps was quite sufficient to mark her different estimation of them. And indeed the Signor had been very kind about the accompaniments, which he had certainly played to perfection. This recollection came to her mind as he thanked her for her singing, undaunted by the stiffness of her leave-taking. "Indeed, I owe you more, a great deal more, than you can possibly owe me," Lottie said, with a burst of compunction; "I never sang so well before, because I never had such an accompaniment." "Then I hope I may accompany you very often again," he said, with a smile, as he went away. Thus even with the Signor Lottie felt herself in perfect good-humour and charity. A man who paid such compliments to her voice, how could she be hard upon him, even if he made a little mistake in respect to her position? And she went in out of the summer night in a state of celestial satisfaction with all the people surrounding her—and herself. Even Lady Caroline had melted into something which was warmth for her. She had said, "I have enjoyed your singing very much, Miss Despard," and had touched Lottie's hand with two limp fingers—that was something, indeed it was much for Lady Caroline. And all the other great ladies had spoken, or at least had smiled upon Lottie, thanking her. What could she have wished for more? She went up into her little tiny room, which was not much bigger than Lady Caroline's grand piano, and throwing off the Indian shawl (if Mrs. O'Shaughnessy could but have seen it!) on the floor, sat down upon her little white bed and began to think. To think! nothing of the sort—to go over everything that had happened, with a dazzle of light and delight and triumph round her. She seemed to herself to have thrown down all the boundaries that had hitherto separated her from her lawful sphere. If a suitor should come from that higher and better world who could wonder now? Had she not been adopted into it—received to her just place at last?

And naturally it was upon Rollo that her recollections chiefly centred; he was the chief figure of the whole company to Lottie. She remembered minutely everything he had said and done, the expression of his face (though she put infinitely more meaning in it than was there), the tone of his voice. How the room had become at once full of interest, of excitement, when he came in, clearing away all the dimness! Lottie had scarcely time even to wonder how and where their next meeting would be, for thinking of this first meeting. How his face had lighted up when he saw that she was there; how he had been caught by some one on his way to her, and kept talking in spite of himself, with his eyes upon her all the time; how he had escaped and pressed through all the fine company to get to her side; how he had confessed that he had but a very visionary right to claim her acquaintance at all, but nevertheless meant to stand on that right as, for the time being, the son of the house! Lottie had scarcely forgotten a word of all he said. And, as a matter of fact, Rollo had been very careful to behave himself with

due discretion, not to make it too apparent that her voice was the thing that most interested him. She thought that he admired her singing as a part of his enthusiasm for herself. She had not a suspicion of the real state of the case. It seemed to her that her voice was a delightful discovery to him, a something *pardessus le marché*, an added charm; that it was the sole foundation of his apparent enthusiasm never occurred to the girl; neither, though she knew that her general triumph was caused by her singing, did she solely set down to that cause the friendly looks and smiles and flattering compliments she had received. This was absurd, but we do not pretend that Lottie was beyond the reach of absurdity. She knew that it was her singing which had suddenly silenced all the conversation going on in the room, and called the attention of everybody; but yet it was surely something more; it was herself, not her voice, which brought that kindly look to their eyes as they smiled upon her. It is hard to acknowledge to ourselves that it is for some special, perhaps accidental, quality we may possess, that we are favoured and esteemed by our fellow-creatures. Human nature is humbled by the conviction that it is the possession of a gift worthy of popularity which makes an individual popular. We all prefer to be prized for nothing at all, for ourselves. And this, in the face of circumstances, and clean against all reason, was what Lottie hoped and determinedly believed. She could not consent to the other idea. To be praised and made friends with for her voice was intolerable. The only approbation which is really flattering and delightful is that which is given upon no ground at all.

She had been sitting thus for some time on her bed, musing, with eyes that sparkled and a heart that fluttered with happiness; and had taken off her evening gown, and loosed the roses from her hair, and wrapped her white shining satin shoulders in a white cotton dressing-gown; and had even brushed out those long dark locks, and twisted them up again close to her head for the night, with innumerable fancies twisted out and in of all she did, before Captain Despard, fumbling for the keyhole, opened his own door and came in, in the dark. It was Lottie's habit to sit up till he came in, but to-night she had been too much occupied by her own concerns to hear his approach, and it was only when he came upstairs that she woke up to think of him. Lottie's experienced ear caught the lurch in his step just as Law's experienced eye had caught it. "Again!" she said to herself, with a momentary flash of anger; but it did not make her wretched as it might have done a more sensitive daughter. Lottie was accustomed to accept her father without question, not expecting much of him, and somewhat disposed, when he did not come up even to the little she expected, to satisfy herself that it was just like papa. But his entrance relieved her from her habitual vigil. She heard Law steal upstairs afterwards, and wondered how or when he had got in, and where he went at night, with more curiosity than she expended on her father; but even that did not much disturb Lottie, who had been

used all her life to irregular entrances and exits. After a while all was still in the little house, notwithstanding the anxieties and excitements collected under its roof. Disquietude and trouble could not keep Law from sleeping any more than excitement and triumph could keep his sister; and, as for the Captain, the sleep of the just was never so profound as that which wrapped him in a not too lovely tranquillity. The air was all thrilling with emotion of one kind or another, but they slept as profoundly as if they had not a care in the world—as soundly as the good O'Shaughnessys next door, who had been asleep since eleven o'clock, and who had no cares but those of their neighbours to disquiet them; or old Colonel Dalrymple on the other side, who dozed through his life. The soft night stilled them all, young and old and middle-aged, in their kind, just as it held in soft shadow the Abbey, with all its grey pinnacles and immemorial towers. Nature cared nothing for the troubles of life; but life submitted to the gentle yoke of nature, which relieves the soul, while it binds the body, and makes a temporary truce and armistice with all the army of mortal cares.

Next morning Law lounged into the little drawing-room after breakfast with a big book in his hand. He had almost given up the pretence of reading for some time, so that it was all the more wonderful to see a book which was not a yellow railway novel in his hand. Lottie had been up early, awakened by the commotion in her mind, which did not allow her to rest—or rather which prevented her from going to sleep again when the early noises of the morning woke her up. Accordingly she had got through a great deal of her ordinary household work by this time, when Law, after a breakfast which was later than usual, lounged in upon her. He was very big, and filled up the little room; and his habit of doing as little as possible, and his want of money, which made some imperfections in his toilet inevitable, gave him a look of indolence and shabbiness such as was not natural to his age, or even to his disposition, for by nature Law was not lazy. He came sauntering in with one hand in his pocket, and with his book under the other arm; and he sat down in the only easy-chair the room contained, exasperating Lottie, to whom his very bigness seemed an offence. There were times when she was proud of Law's size, his somewhat heavy good looks, his athletic powers; but this morning, as many times before, the very sight of those long limbs jarred upon her. What was the use of all that superfluous length and strength? He took the only easy-chair, and stretched out his long limbs half across the room, and Lottie at the height of her activity felt impatience rise and swell within her. She could not put up with Law that morning. His indolence was an offence to her.

"What do you want, Law?" she said, in a voice which was not so sweet as it had been at the Deanery. She gave a rapid glance up at him as she went on with her darning, and took in the whole picture, the easy-chair and the lounging attitude. If he had sat upright upon the little hard wicker-work chair, Lottie would have felt more merciful.

"Well, I want nothing in particular, except to talk to you a little," said Law. "You need not be so cross."

"I am not cross; but to see you in an easy-chair, idling away all the morning——"

"How do you know I've been idling this morning? Look at my book; that's *Virgil*," said Law, looking at it with simple admiration. "I don't think a fellow could do much better than that."

"But have you *really* been reading?" Lottie's tone modified; she began to look at him with respect. "Oh, Law, if you only would work! it would make such a difference, it would make me quite happy. I was speaking to Mr. Ashford last night. You know Mr. Ashford, the Minor Canon. He is so clever with his pupils. If you could but go to him, if he would only take you, Law!"

"He would take me fast enough if we could afford the money. I say, Lottie, the governor was awfully late last night; did you hear him coming in? I want to tell you something about him—something I have heard."

"I think you were very late, too, Law."

"Oh! never mind about that; it does not matter about me. Lottie, listen. A friend—I mean somebody—was speaking to me about him. Did it ever come into your head that he was not an old man, and that such a thing was possible as that he might—it seems too ridiculous to say it—marry again?"

"Marry again? you are dreaming!" cried Lottie loudly, in her astonishment.

"Yes, while we knew nothing of it. After all, when you come to think of it, when you look at him, you know, he is not so awfully old. One thinks he must be, because he is one's father. But some of these old beggars are just as silly"—said Law in awe-struck tones, "and you can't stop them doing things as you can a fellow that is young. It is an awful shame! a fellow that is under age, as they call it, you can pull him up, though there's no harm in him; but an old fellow of fifty, you can't stop him, whatever nonsense he may set his face to. That's what I heard last night."

"It is not true. I don't believe a single word of it," said Lottie. "You must have been in very strange company, Law," she added with severity, "to hear all this gossip about papa."

Lottie did not mean to pass such a tremendous sentence on her father; she spoke simply enough. To hear this gossip her brother must have been in haunts such as those that Captain Despard frequented. She did not know what they were, but she knew they were evil; therefore she made use of this weapon instinctively, which she found, as it were, lying by her, not meaning any censure upon her father, only a necessary reproof to Law.

"You may say what you please about bad company," he said, "but that's what I heard; that he wasn't so old after all; and what would

become of us if he married again? It was not gossip. I believe really, though I was very angry at the time, that it was meant kindly; it was meant for a warning. You would have thought so yourself, if you had been there."

"I do not believe a word of it!" said Lottie; but she had grown pale. She did not ask again who had told him or where he had been; she set herself seriously to prove the thing to be false, which showed that she was not so sure of not believing it as she pretended to be. "It is all a falsehood," she went on. "Is papa a man to do that sort of thing? Marry! he would have to give up a great many things if he married. He could not afford to spend his money as he does; he would not be allowed to be always out in the evenings as he is now. Why, even poor mamma, she did not give in to him as we are obliged to do; he had to pay a little attention to her—sometimes. And now he has got more used to do what he likes than ever, and has more money to spend; do you think he would give up that *for a wife*?" cried Lottie with disdain. "It only shows that you don't know papa."

"Ah! but you don't know—" said Law. He was about to say Polly, but stopped in time. "You don't know what might be put into his head, Lottie. He might be made to believe that to get rid of us would put all right. If he got rid of us, don't you see? he would want a woman in the house; and if it was some one he liked himself, that would make herself agreeable to him, and flatter him, and coddle him—that would please him better," said Law, with precocious knowledge of a man's requirements, "than you who are always trying to keep things straight but not to humour him, Lottie; or me—that am of no use at all."

Lottie grew paler and paler during this explanation. She had never humoured her father, it was true. She had made desperate exertions "to keep things straight," to recover the family credit, to pay the bills, to keep regular hours; but, with the hardihood of youth, she had not hesitated even to stint her father of a meal when it seemed to her impetuous determination to be necessary, and she had not flattered him, nor made his convenience the absolute rule of the household, as some girls would have been wise enough to do. Lottie had reflected that he kept the lion's share of the family income to himself, and was quite able to make up for any shortcomings in her bill of fare; and she had carried out her regulations with a high hand, feeling no compulsion upon her, no primary necessity to please her father. She perceived all this at a glance while Law spoke, and immediately felt herself confronting such a breach of all the ordinary usages of her life as made her shiver. What might he not do? turn them out suddenly from his doors, out upon the world, at any moment whenever he pleased. He had the power to do it whenever he pleased, whatever seemed to him good. She drew a long shivering breath, feeling as if all were over, as if already she heard the door clanging and barred behind her, and was looking out penniless and destitute upon the world, not knowing where to go. Was it possible that

such a fate was reserved for her? She became as white as her dress with that sudden panic of the imagination which is more terrible than any reality. Law was very anxious and alarmed also, but he had got over the worst on the previous night, and it gave him a kind of half pleasure to see how he had frightened Lottie; though, at the same time, the effect of his communication upon her deepened his own conviction of the danger about to overtake them. He leaned back in his easy-chair with a certain solemn satisfaction, and stretched his long legs farther across the room than ever.

"You see, Lottie," he said, "it is what I have told you before; you never would humour him. I don't say that he's not unreasonable, but he might never perhaps have dropped among those sort of people if you had laid yourself out to——"

Lottie sprang to her feet in a sudden gust of passion. She took Law by the shoulders, and with the sudden surprise of her assault got the better of him and turned him out of the chair. "You sit there, lolling all over the room," she cried, "and tell me my duty, you lazy, idle, useless boy! If papa turns you out, it will serve you right. You have a hundred things open to you; you have the whole world open to you; but you will not so much as take the trouble to pass the door. You would like to be carried over all the ditches, to be set up on a throne, to have everything and to do nothing. It will serve you right! And where do you get all this gossip about papa?" she went on. "Who are the sort of people you are spending your time with? You thought I did not know how late you came in last night. Where were you, Law? where are you always, all these long evenings? You say you are going out, and you never mind that I am sitting in the house all alone. You go somewhere, but I never hear that you have been with anybody—anybody in our own class——"

"In our own class! I wonder what is our own class?" said Law, with a scornful sense of the weakness of the position. "Would you like me to take a hand in old O'Shaughnessy's rubber, or read the papers to old Dalrymple? They are half as old again as the governor himself. I suppose that's what you call my own class."

Lottie felt that she had laid herself open to defeat, and the consciousness subdued her greatly. She sat down again on her little chair, and looked up at him as he stood leaning upon the door, red with indignation at her onslaught. Lottie herself was flushed with the exertion, and the shame of having thus afforded him an opportunity for a scoff. She eluded the dilemma as he proposed it, however, and flung herself back into the larger question. "You are grown up," she said, indignantly; "a great big boy, looking like a man. It is a disgrace to you to be dependent on papa. It would be a good thing for you, a very good thing, if he were to——marry, as you say, and cast you off, and force you to work for yourself. What else have I been saying to you for years!"

"And what would it be for you?" said Law, taking, she thought, an unkind advantage of her; "there are two of us to be considered. What would it be for you, Lottie, I should like to know? What could you do any more than I?"

He stood up, against the door, with a provoking smile on his face, and his big book under his arm, taunting her with her helplessness, even, Lottie felt, with her high notions, which made her helplessness all the worse. He smiled, looking down upon her from that serene height. "If the worst came to the worst," said Law, "I could always carry a hod or 'list for a soldier. I don't stand upon our class as you do. I haven't got a class. I don't mind if I take the shilling to-morrow. I have always thought it would be a jolly life."

Lottie gave a scream of horror, and flew upon him, seizing his coat collar with one hand, while she threatened him with her small nervous fist, at which Law laughed. "Will you dare to speak of 'listing to me," she said, flaming like a little fury; "you, an officer's son, and a gentleman born!" Then she broke down, after so many varieties of excitement. "Oh, Law, for the sake of heaven, go to Mr. Ashford! I will get the money somehow," she said, in a broken voice, melting into tears, through which her eyes shone doubly large and liquid. "Don't break my heart! I want you to be better than we are now, not worse. Climb up as far, as far as you please, above us; but don't fall lower. Don't forget you are a gentleman, unless you want to break my heart."

And then, in the overflow of feeling, she leaned her head upon his shoulder, which she had just gripped with fury, and cried. Law found this more embarrassing than her rage, at which he laughed. He was obliged to allow her to lean upon him, pushing his book out of the way, and his heart smote him for making Lottie unhappy. By this time it could not be said that he was unhappy himself. He had shuffled off his burden, such as it was, upon her shoulders. He shifted his book, and stood awkwardly enough, permitting her to lean upon him; but it cannot be said that he was much of a prop to his sister. He held himself so as to keep her off as far as possible. He was not unkind, but he was shy, and did not like to be placed in a position which savoured of the ridiculous. "I wish you wouldn't cry," he said, peevishly. "You girls always cry—and what's to be got by crying? I don't want to 'list if I can help it. I'd rather be an officer—but I can't be an officer; or get into something; but I never was bred up to anything; and what can I do?"

"You can go to Mr. Ashford," said Lottie, feeling herself repulsed, and withdrawing from him with a glimmer of indignation relighted in her eyes. "I met him last night, and I spoke to him about you. He seems very kind. If you go to him, he will at least tell us whether he thinks you have a chance for anything. Oh, Law, now that you do see the necessity——"

"But it's a great deal more serious for you," said the lad, mis-

chievously. He was not unkind, but it seemed something like fun to him to treat Lottie as she had treated him so often, holding up before him the terrors and horrors of his idleness. Because she was a girl, did that make any difference? She had just as good a right to be bullied as he had, and to be made to see how little she could do for herself. Emma, who was younger than Lottie, worked for her living, and why should not Lottie do the same? why should she be exempted? Thus Law reasoned, whom Lottie, it must be allowed, had never spared. He watched, with mischievous curiosity, making an experiment, not knowing whether it would be successful or not. But the way in which Lottie took it after this did not give Law the amusement he expected. She sat down again in her chair, taking no further notice of him and relapsed into her own thoughts when he could not follow her. His own mind, however, had recovered its elasticity; for, after all, if the worst came to the worst, if the governor was such an ass as to marry Polly, it would not matter so very much to Law. Something, there was no doubt, would turn up; or he would list—that was an alternative not to be despised. He was tall enough for the Guards, among whom Law had often heard a great many gentlemen were to be found; and the life was a jolly life—no bother about books, and plenty of time for amusement. There was nothing really in the circumstances to appal him now he had considered them fully. But it was a great deal more serious for Lottie. After all the bullying he had endured at her hands, Law may perhaps be excused if, in sheer thoughtlessness, he rather enjoyed the prospect of this turning of the tables upon his sister. He wondered how she would like it when it came to her turn, she who was so ready to urge himself to the last limits of patience. He did not wish anything unpleasant to happen to her. He would not have had her actually brought into contact with Polly, or placed under her power. But that Lottie should “just see how she liked it herself” was pleasant to him. It would not do her any real harm, and perhaps it would teach her to feel for other people, and understand that they did not like it either. A slight tinge of remorse crossed Law’s mind as he saw how pale and serious she looked, sitting there thinking; but he shifted his Virgil to his other arm, and went away, steeling his heart against it. It would make her feel for other people in future. To have it brought home to herself would do her no harm.

CHAPTER IX.

VISITORS.

AND what a problem it was with which Lottie Despard was thus left alone! The house was still, no one moving in it—nothing to distract her thoughts. Now and then a swell of music from the Abbey, where service was going on, swept in, filling the silence for a moment; but

most of the inhabitants of the Lodges were at matins, and all was very still in the sunshine, the Dean's Walk lying broad and quiet, with scarcely a shadow to break the light. Downstairs the little maid-of-all-work had closed the door of the kitchen, so that her proceedings were inaudible. And the Captain, as in duty bound, was in the Abbey, trolling forth the responses in a fine baritone, as he might have done had they been the chorus of a song. Lottie sat like a statue in the midst of this stillness, her eyes abstracted, her mind absorbed. What a problem to occupy her! Law, rustling over his books in his own room, grew frightened as he thought of her. She would break her heart; it would make her ill; it might almost kill her, he thought. She sat with her work dropped on her knee, her eyes fixed but not seeing anything, her mind—what could occupy it but one reflection? the sudden possibility of a breaking up of all her traditions, an end of her young life—a dismal sudden survey of the means of maintaining herself, and where she could go to in case this unthought-of catastrophe should occur at once. Poor desolate Lottie, motherless, friendless, with no one to consult in such an emergency, no one to fly to! What could be more terrible than to be brought face to face with such an appalling change, unwarned, unprepared? What was she to do; where was she to go? Worse than an orphan, penniless, homeless, what would become of her? No wonder if despair was paramount in the poor girl's thoughts.

Well—but then despair was not paramount in her thoughts. She made a stand for a moment with wild panic before the sudden danger. What was it that was going to happen? Lottie gave a momentary gasp as a swimmer might do making the first plunge; and then, like the swimmer, lo! struck off with one quick movement into the sunshine and the smoothest gentle current. Change! the air was full of it, the world was full of it, the sky was beautiful with it, and her heart sprang to meet it. Do you think a girl of twenty on the verge of love, once left free to silence and musing, was likely to forget her own dreams in order to plunge into dark reveries as to what would happen to her if her father married again? Not Lottie, at least. She launched herself indeed on this subject, the corners of her mouth dropping, a gleam of panic in her eyes; but something caught her midway. Ah! it was like the touch of a magician's wand. What did it matter to Lottie what might happen to other people; had not everything that was wonderful, everything that was beautiful, begun to happen to herself? She floated off insensibly into that delicious current of her own thoughts, losing herself in imaginary scenes and dialogues. She lost her look of terror without knowing it, a faint smile came upon her face, a faint colour, now heightening, now paling, went and came like breath. Sometimes she resumed her work, and her needle sped through her mending like the shuttle of the Fates; sometimes it dropped out of her hand altogether, and the work upon her knee. She lost count of time and of what she was doing. What was she doing? She was weaving a poem,

a play, a romance, as she sat with her basket of stockings to darn. The *mise en scène* was varied, but the personages always the same; two personages—never any more; sometimes they only looked at each other, saying nothing; sometimes they talked for hours; and constantly in their talk they were approaching one subject, which something always occurred to postpone. This indefinite postponement of the explanation which, even in fiction, is a device which must be used sparingly, can be indulged in without stint in the private imagination, and Lottie in her romance took full advantage of this power. She approached the borders of her *éclaircissement* a hundred times, and evaded it with the most delicate skill, feeling by instinct the superior charm of the vague and undecided, and how love itself loses its variety, its infinite novelty, and delightfulness, when it has declared and acknowledged itself. Law, in his room with his big book, comforting himself under the confused and painful study to which the shock of last night's suggestion had driven him by the idea that Lottie too must be as uncomfortable as himself, was as much mistaken as it was possible to imagine. His compunction and his satisfaction were equally thrown away. Still the feeling that he had startled her, and the hope that it would "do her good," gave him a little consolation in his reading, such as it was. And how difficult it was to read with the sun shining outside, and little puffs of soft delicious air coming in at his open window, and laying hands upon him, who shall say? He was comforted to think that next door to him, Lottie with her basket of clothes to mend, patching and darning, must be very much disturbed too; but it would have been hard upon Law had he known that she had escaped from all this, and was meanly and treacherously enjoying herself in private gardens of fancy. He had his Emma to be sure—but of her and the very well-known scenes that enclosed her, and all the matter-of-fact circumstances around, he felt no inclination to dream. He liked to have her by him, and for her sake submitted to the chatter of the workroom (which, on the whole, rather amused him in itself), and was quite willing to read the *Family Herald* aloud; but he did not dream of Emma as Lottie did of the incident which had happened in her career. It was true there was this fundamental difference between them, that Lottie's romance alone had any margin of the unknown and mysterious in it. About Emma there was nothing that was mysterious or unknown.

It was not likely, however, that these two young people in their two different rooms, Law gazing over his Virgil, and feeling his eyes wander after every fly that lighted on his book, and every bird that chirped in the deep foliage round the window; and Lottie with her needle and her scissors, thinking of everything in the world except what she was doing or what had just been told her, should be left undisturbed for long in these virtuous occupations. Very soon Law was stopped in the middle of a bigger yawn than usual by the sound of a step coming up the stairs, which distracted his not very seriously fixed attention—and Lottie woke

up from the very middle of an imaginary conversation, to hear a mellow round voice calling her, as it came slowly panting upstairs. "Are you there then, Lottie, me honey? You'd never let me mount up to the top of the house, without telling me, if ye weren't there?" Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, like many of her country-folks, was half aware of the bull she was uttering, and there was a sound of laughter in her voice. Lottie, however, sat still, making no sign, holding her needle suspended in her fingers, reluctant to have her pleasant thoughts disturbed by any arrival. But while the brother and sister, each behind a closed door, thus paused and listened, the Captain (audibly) coming home from morning service, stepped in after Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, and addressed the new comer. "Lottie is in the drawing-room," he said, "though she does not answer. 'I am just going out again when I've fetched something—but I must first see you upstairs;' " and then there was an interval of talking on the stairs and the little landing-place. Lottie made no movement for her part. She sat amidst her darnings, and awaited what was coming, feeling that her time for dreams was over. Captain Despard came lightly up, three steps at a time, after Mrs. O'Shaughnessy had panted to the drawing-room door. He was jaunty and gay as ever, in his well-brushed coat with a rosebud in his buttonhole. Few, very few days were there, on which Captain Despard appeared without a flower in his coat. He managed to get them even in winter, no one could tell how. Sometimes a flaming red leaf from the Virginia creeper, answered his purpose, but he was always jaunty, gay, decorated with something or other. He came in behind the large figure of their neighbour, holding out a glove with a hole in the finger, reproachfully to Lottie. "See how my child neglects me," he said. He liked to display himself even to Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, and stood and talked to her while Lottie, with no very good grace, put down her darning and mended his glove.

"When I was a young fellow, my dear lady," he said, "I never wanted for somebody to mend my glove; but a man can't expect to be as interesting to his daughter as he was in another stage of life."

"Oh, Captain, take me word," said Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, "the likes of you will always be interesting to one or another. You won't make me believe that ye find nobody but your daughter to do whatever ye ask them. Tell that—to another branch of the service, Captain Despard, me dear friend."

"You do me a great deal too much honour," he said, with the laugh of flattered vanity; for he was not difficult in the way of compliments. "Alas, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, who would pay any attention to an old married man, the father of a grown-up son and daughter, like me?"

"Sure, and you're much to be pitied, so old as ye are, with one foot in the grave, Captain dear," the old Irishwoman said; and they both laughed, she enjoying at once her joke, and the pleasure of seeing her victim's pleased appreciation of the compliment; while he, conscious of being still irresistible, eyed himself in the little glass over the mantelpiece,

and was quite unaware of the lurking demon of good-humoured malice and ridicule in her eyes.

"Not so bad as that perhaps," he said, "but bad enough. A man grows old fast in this kind of life. Matins every morning by cockerow, to a man accustomed to take his ease, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy. The Major grumbles, I make no doubt, as well as I."

"Sure it's nothing half as bad as morning parade. That's what O'Shaughnessy says; and he never was used to his ease, Captain. I took better care of him than that. But, Lottie, me honey, here we're talking of ourselves, and it's you I've come to hear about. How many hearts did ye break; how many scalps have ye got, as we used to say in Canada? It wasn't for nothing ye put on your finery, and those roses in your hair. The Captain, he's the one for a flower in his coat; you're his own daughter, Miss Lottie dear."

"Were you out last night, my child?" said Captain Despard, taking his glove from Lottie's hand. "Ah, at the Deanery. I hope my friend the Dean is well, and my Lady Caroline? Lady Caroline was once a very fine woman, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, though you would not think it. The Courtlands were neighbours of ours in our better days, and knew all our connections; and Lady Caroline has always been kind to Lottie. I do not think it necessary to provide any chaperon for her when she goes there. It is in society that a girl feels the want of a mother; but where Lady Caroline is Lottie can feel at home."

"Fancy that now," said Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, "how a body may be deceived! I never knew ye were among old friends, Captain. What a comfort to you—till you find somebody that will be a nice chaperon for your dear girl!"

"Yes, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, that would be a satisfaction; but where could I find one that would satisfy me after Lottie's dear mother, who was a pearl of a woman? Good-morning to you, my dear lady; I must be going," he said, kissing the fingers of the mended glove. And he went out of the room humming a tune, which, indeed, was as much a distinction of Captain Despard as the flower in his coat. He was always cheerful, whatever happened. His daughter looked up from her work, following him with her eyes, and Law, shut up in his room next door, stopped reading (which indeed he was very glad to do), and listened to the light carol of the Captain's favourite air, and his jaunty step as he went downstairs. No lurch in that step now, but a happy confidence and cheerful ring upon the pavement when he got outside, keeping time surely not only to the tune, but to the Captain's genial and virtuous thoughts. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy looked after him without the cloud which was on his children's faces. She laughed. "Then, sure it does one's heart good," she said, "to see a man as pleased with himself as me friend the Captain. And Lottie, me darlin', speaking of that, there's a word I have to say to you. Ye heard what I said and ye heard what he said about a chaperon—though, bless the child, it's not much use, so far as I can see, that you have for a chaperon——"

"No use at all," cried Lottie, "and don't say anything about it, please. Papa talks; but nobody pays any attention to him," she exclaimed, with a flush of shame.

"If he'd stop at talking! but Lottie, me dear, when a man at his age gets women in his head, there's no telling what is to come of it. I wouldn't vex ye, me dear, but there's gossip about—that the Captain has thoughts——"

"Oh, never mind what gossip there is about! there's gossip about everything——"

"And that's true, me honey. There's your own self. They tell me a dozen stories. It's married ye're going to be (and that's natural); and there's them that uphold it's not marriage at all, but music, or maybe the stage even, which is what I never would have thought likely——"

Lottie had risen to her feet, her eyes sparkling, her face crimson with excitement. "Wherever you hear it, please, *please* say it is a lie. I—on the stage! Oh, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, could you believe such a thing? I would rather die!"

"Dying's a strong step to take, me dear. I wouldn't go that length, Lottie; but at your age, and with your pretty looks, and all the world before ye, it's not the thing I would advise. I don't say but there are chances for a pretty girl that's well conducted——"

"Mrs. O'Shaughnessy! do you dare to speak to me so?" said Lottie with crimson cheeks, her eyes blazing through indignant tears. Well conducted! the insult went to her very soul. But this was beyond the perception of her companion.

"Just so, me dear," she said. "There was Miss O'Neil, that was a great star in my time, and another stage lady that married the Earl of ——, one of the English earls. I forget his title. Lords and baronets and that sort of people are thrown in their way, and sometimes a pretty girl that minds what she is about, or even a plain girl that is clever, comes in for something that would never——Who is that, Lottie? Me dear, look out of the window, and tell me who it is."

Lottie did not say a word; she gasped with pain and indignation, standing erect in the middle of the room. How it made the blood boil in her veins to have the triumphs of the "stage-ladies" thus held up before her! She did not care who was coming. In her fantastical self-elevation, a sort of princess in her own sight, who was there here who would understand Lottie's "position" or her feelings? What was the use even of standing up for herself where everybody would laugh at her? There was no one in the Chevaliers' Lodges who could render her justice. They would all think that to "catch" an earl or a Sir William was enough to content any girl's ambition. So long as she was well conducted! To be well conducted, is not that the highest praise that can be given to anyone? Yet it made Lottie's blood boil in her veins.

While she stood thus flushed and angry, the door was suddenly pushed open by the untrained "girl," who was all that the household boasted in

the shape of a servant. "She's here, sir," this homely usher said; and lo, suddenly, into the little room where sat Mrs. O'Shaughnessy taking up half the space, and where Lottie stood in all the excitement and glow of passion, there walked Rollo Ridsdale, like a hero of romance, more perfect in costume, appearance and manner, more courteous and easy, more graceful and gracious, than anything that had ever appeared within that lower sphere. The Captain was jaunty and shabby-genteel, yet even he sometimes dazzled innocent people with his grand air; but Mr. Ridsdale was all that the Captain only pretended to be, and the very sight of him was a revelation. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, sitting with her knees apart and her hands laid out upon her capacious lap, opened her mouth and gazed at him as if he had been an angel straight from the skies. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy knew him, as she knew every one who came within the Abbey precincts. She was aware of every visit he paid to his aunt, and saw him from her window every time he passed up and down the Dean's Walk, and she had the most intimate acquaintance with all his connections, and knew his exact place in the Courtland family, and even that there had been vicissitudes in his life more than generally fall to the lot of young men of exalted position. And, if it did her good even to see him from her window, and pleased her to be able to point him out as the Honourable Rollo Ridsdale, it may be imagined what her feelings were, when she found herself suddenly under the same roof with him, in the same room with him. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy sat and stared, devouring his honourable figure with her eyes, with a vague sensation of delight and grandeur taking possession of her soul.

"You must pardon my intrusion at such an early hour, Miss Despard," he said. "I wanted your maid to ask if I might come in, and I did not know she was ushering me into your very presence. But I have my credentials with me. I bear a note from Lady Caroline, which she charged me to support with my prayers."

The passion melted out of Lottie's countenance. Her eyes softened—the very lines of her figure, all proud and erect and vehement, melted too as if by a spell—the flush of anger on her cheek changed to a rose-red of gentler feeling. The transformation was exactly what the most accomplished actress would have desired to make, with the eye of an able manager inspecting her possibilities. "I beg your pardon," she said instinctively, with a sudden sense of guilt. It shocked her to be found so full of passion, so out of harmony with the melodious visitor who was in perfect tune and keeping with the sweet morning, and in whose presence all the vulgarities about seemed doubly vulgar. She felt humble, yet not humiliated. Here was at last one who would understand her, who would do her justice. She looked round to find a seat for him, confused, not knowing what to say.

"May I come here?" said Rollo, pushing forward for her the little chair from which she had evidently risen, and placing himself upon the narrow window seat with his back to the light. "But let me give up

my credentials first. My aunt is—what shall I say?—a little indolent, Miss Despard. Dear Aunt Caroline, it is an unkind word—shall I say she is not fond of action? Pardon if it is I who have acted as secretary. I do so constantly now that Augusta is away."

"Lottie," said Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, as Lottie, confused, took the note from his hand, and the chair he offered; "me dear!—you have not presented me to your friend."

Rollo got up instantly and bowed, as Lottie faltered forth his name. ("A real bow," Mrs. O'Shaughnessy said after; "sure you never get the like but in the upper classes"), while she herself, not to be outdone, rose too, and extended a warm hand—"What does the woman expect me to do with her hand?" was Mr. Ridsdale's alarmed commentary on his side.)

"I'm proud to make your acquaintance, sir," said Mrs. O'Shaughnessy. "My husband the Major was once a great friend of an uncle of yours, Mr. Ridsdale—or maybe it was a cousin; when we were out in Canada, in the Hundred and Fiftieth—the Honourable Mr. Green; they were together in musketry practice, and me Major had the pleasure of being of a great deal of use to the gentleman. Many a time he's told me of it; and when we came here, sure it was a pleasure to find out that me Lady Caroline was aunt—or maybe it was cousin—to an old friend. "I am very glad to make your acquaintance," Mrs. O'Shaughnessy continued, shaking him warmly by the hand, which she had held all this time. Mr. Ridsdale kept bowing at intervals, and had done all that he could, without positive rudeness, to get himself free.

"Oh yes," he said, "I have cousins and uncles and that sort of thing scattered through the earth in every regiment under the sun; and very bad soldiers, I don't doubt, always wanting somebody to look after them. I am sure Major O'Shaughnessy was very kind. Won't you sit down?"

"It wasn't to make a brag of his kindness—not a bit of that—but he is a kind man, and a good man, Mr. Ridsdale, though I say it that shouldn't. I have been married to me Major these forty years, and if anyone knows it, I ought to be the one to know."

"Undoubtedly, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy. I for one am most ready to take the fact on your word."

"And you'd be in the right of it. A man's wife, that's the best judge of his character. Whatever another may say, she's the one that knows; and if she says too much, one way or the other, sure it's on herself it falls. But, maybe you're not interested, Mr. Ridsdale, in an old woman's opinions?"

"I am very much interested, I assure you," said Rollo, always polite. He kept an eye upon Lottie reading her note, but he listened to her friend (if this was her friend) with as much attention, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy always remembered, as if she had been a duchess at the least.

Meanwhile Lottie read the note, which purported to come from Lady Caroline, and had a wavering C. Huntington at the bottom of the page,

which was her genuine autograph. The warmth of the appeal, however, to her dear Miss Despard, to take pity on the dulness of the Deanery and come in "quietly" that evening for a little music, was not in any way Lady Caroline's. She had consented indeed to permit herself to be sung to on Rollo's strenuous representation of the pleasure it had given her. "You know, Aunt Caroline, you enjoyed it," he had said; and "Yes, I know I enjoyed it," Lady Caroline, much wavering, had replied. It would not have been creditable not to have enjoyed what was evidently such very good singing; but it was not she who wrote of the dulness of the Deanery nor who used such arguments to induce her dear Miss Despard to come. Lottie's countenance bending over the note glowed with pleasure as Mrs. O'Shaughnessy kept up the conversation. Even with those girls who think they believe that the admiration of men is all they care for, the approbation of a woman above their own rank is always a more touching and more thorough triumph than any admiration of men. And Lottie, though she was so proud, was all humility in this respect; that Lady Caroline should thus take her up, and encourage her, praise her, invite her, went to her very heart. She almost cried over the kind words. She raised her face all softened and glowing with happiness to the anxious messenger who was listening to Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, and as their eyes met a sudden smile of such responsive pleasure and satisfaction came to Rollo's face as translated Lottie back into the very paradise of her dreams.

"I can't say, me dear sir," said Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, "that things are just exactly as we wish here, or as we thought we had a right to look for. The Major and me, we've been used to a deal of fine company. Wherever we've gone, was it in Canada, was it the Channel Islands, was it at the dépôt of the regiment, we've always been called upon by the best. But here, sure the position is not what we were led to expect. Money is all that most people are thinking of. There's the society in the town would jump at us. But that does not count, Mr. Ridsdale, you know, that does not count; for to us in her Majesty's service, that have always been accustomed to the best——"

"Surely, surely, I quite understand; and you have a right to the best. Miss Despard," said the ambassador, "I hope you are considering what Lady Caroline says, and will not disappoint our hopes. Last night was triumph, but this will be enjoyment. You, who must know what talent Miss Despard has—I appeal to you, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy. I am sure from your kind looks that we will have your aid."

"Is it to go and sing for them again, Lottie, me dear?" said the old lady in an undertone. "That's just what I don't like, Mr. Ridsdale—excuse me if I speak my mind free—me Lady Caroline and his reverence the Dean, they're ready enough to take an advantage, and make their own use of the Chevaliers'——"

"Do I need to write a note?" said Lottie, interrupting hastily to prevent the completion of a speech which seemed to threaten the very

foundations of her happiness. "Perhaps it would be more polite to write a note." She looked at him with a little anxiety, for the thought passed through her mind that she had no pretty paper like this, with a pretty monogram and "The Deanery, St. Michael's," printed on its creamy glaze, and even that she did not write a pretty hand that would do her credit; and, going further, that she would not know how to begin, whether she should be familiar, and venture upon saying, "Dear Lady Caroline," which seemed rather presumptuous, calling an old lady by her Christian name—or——

"I need not trouble you to write. I am sure you mean to say yes, Miss Despard, which is almost more than I dared hope. Yes is all we want, and I shall be so happy to carry it——"

"Yes is easy said," said Mrs. O'Shaughnessy; "a great deal easier than no. Oh, me dear, I don't object to your going; not a bit; only I take an interest in ye, and ye must not make yourself too cheap. Know her talent, Mr. Ridsdale? sure I can't say that I do. I know herself, and a better girl, saving for a bit of temper, don't exist. But a girl is the better of a spark of temper, and that's just what you've got, me dear Lottie. No; I don't know her talent. She has a voice for singing, that I know well; for to hear her and Rowley when she's having her lesson, sure it's enough to give a deaf person the earache. But that's the most that I know."

"Then, Miss Despard," said Rollo, springing to his feet; "if your—friend is in this condition of doubt, it is impossible she can ever have heard you; will you not gratify me and convince her by singing something now? I know it is horrible impertinence on my part, so recent an acquaintance. But—no, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, you never can have heard her. I have some songs here that I know you would sing to perfection. I deserve to be ordered out of the house for my presumption. I know it; but——" and he clasped his hands and fixed supplicating eyes upon Lottie, who, blushing, trembling, frightened, and happy, did not know how to meet those eyes.

"Sure he'll be down on his knees next," cried Mrs. O'Shaughnessy delighted; "and you wouldn't have the heart to deny the gentleman when he begs so pretty. I'll not say but what I've heard her, and heard her many a time, but maybe the change of the circumstances and the want of Rowley will make a difference. Come, Lottie, me darling, don't wait for pressing, but give us a song, and let us be done with it. If it was a good song you would sing, and not one of those sacred pieces that make me feel myself in the Abbey—where we all are, saving your presence, often enough——"

"I have a song here that will please you, I know," said Rollo. "We shall have you crying in two minutes. You don't know, my dear Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, what a glorious organ you are talking of."

"Organ! that's the Abbey all over; but, praised be heaven, there's no organ here, only an old cracked piano——"

Hereditary Traits.

IN MONTAIGNE'S well-known essay on the *Resemblance of Children to their Fathers*, the philosopher of Périgord remarks that "there is a certain sort of crafty humility that springs from presumption; as this, for example, that we confess our ignorance in many things, and are so courteous as to acknowledge that there are in works of nature some qualities and conditions that are imperceptible to us, and of which our understanding cannot discern the means and causes; by which honest declaration we hope to obtain that people shall also believe us of those that we say we do understand." "We need not trouble ourselves," he goes on, "to seek out miracles and strange difficulties; methinks there are such incomprehensible wonders amongst the things that we ordinarily see as surpass all difficulties of miracles." He applies these remarks to inherited peculiarities of feature, figure, character, constitution, habits, and so forth. And certainly few of the phenomena of nature are more wonderful than these, in the sense of being less obviously referable to any cause which seems competent to produce them. Many of those natural phenomena which are regarded as most striking are in this respect not to be compared with the known phenomena of heredity. The motions of the planets can all be referred to regular laws; chemical changes are systematic, and their sequence at least is understood; the phenomena of heat, light, and electricity are gradually finding interpretation. It is true that all these phenomena become in a sense as miracles when we endeavour to ascertain their real cause. In their case we can ascertain the "how," but in no sense the "why." Gravity is a mystery of mysteries to the astronomer, and has almost compelled us to believe in that "action at a distance" which Newton asserted to be unimaginable by anyone with a competent power of reasoning about things philosophical. The ultimate cause of chemical changes is as great a mystery now as it was when the four elements were believed in. And the nature of the ether itself in which the undulations of heat, light, and electricity are transmitted is utterly mysterious even to those students of science who have been most successful in determining the laws according to which those undulations proceed. But the phenomena themselves being at once referable (in our own time at least) to law, have no longer the mysterious and in a sense miraculous character recognised in them before the laws of motion, of chemical affinity, of light and heat and electricity, had been ascertained. It is quite otherwise with the phenomena of heredity. We

know nothing even of the proximate cause of any single phenomenon; far less of that ultimate cause in which all these phenomena had their origin. The inheritance of a trait of bodily figure, character, or manner is a mystery as great as that other and cognate mystery, the appearance of some seemingly sudden variation in a race which has for many generations presented an apparently unvarying succession of attributes, bodily, physical, or mental.

It need hardly be said that this would not be the place for the discussion of the problems of heredity and variation, even if in the present position of science we could hope for any profitable result from the investigation of either subject. But some of the curious facts which have been noted by various students of heredity will, we think, be found interesting; and though not suggesting in the remotest degree any solution of the real difficulties of the subject, they may afford some indication of the laws according to which parental traits are inherited, or seemingly sudden variations introduced.

The commonest, and therefore the least interesting, though perhaps the most instructive of the phenomena of heredity, are those affecting the features and the outward configuration of the body. These have been recognised in all ages, and among all nations. A portion of the Jewish system of legislature was based on a recognition of the law that children inherit the bodily qualities of the parents. The Greeks noted the same fact. Among the Spartans, indeed, a system of selection from among new-born children prevailed, which, though probably intended only to eliminate the weaker individuals, corresponded closely to what would be done by a nation having full belief in the efficacy of both natural and artificial selection, and not troubled with any strong scruples as to the method of applying their doctrines on such matters. Among the Romans we find certain families described by their physical characteristics, as the *Nasones* or Big-nosed, the *Labeones* or Thick-lipped, the *Capitones* or Big-headed, the *Bucones* or Swollen-cheeked. In more recent times similar traits have been recognised in various families. The Austrian lip and the Bourbon nose are well-known instances.*

Peculiarities of structure have a double interest, as illustrating both variation and persistence. We usually find them introduced without any apparent cause into a family, and afterwards they remain as hereditary traits, first inherited regularly, then intermittently, and eventually, in most cases, dying out or becoming so exceptional that their occurrence is not regarded as an hereditary peculiarity. Montaigne mentions that in the family of Lepidus, at Rome, there were three, not successively but by intervals, that were born with the same eye covered with a cartilage. At Thebes there was a family almost every member of which had the crown of the head pointed like a lance-head, all whose

* It is said by Ribot that of all the features the nose is the one which heredity preserves best.

heads were not so formed being regarded as illegitimate. A better authenticated case is that of the Lambert family. The peculiarity affecting this family appeared first in the person of Edward Lambert, whose whole body, except the face, the palms of the hands, and the soles of the feet, was covered with a sort of shell consisting of horny excrescences. He was the father of six children, all of whom, so soon as they had reached the age of six weeks, presented the same peculiarity. Only one of them lived. He married, and transmitted the peculiarity to all his sons. For five generations all the male members of the Lambert family were distinguished by the horny excrescences which had adorned the body of Edward Lambert.

A remarkable instance of the transmission of anomalous characteristics is found in the case of Andrian Jeftichjew, who, three or four years ago, was exhibited with his son Fedor Jeftichjew in Berlin and Paris. They were called in Paris *les hommes-chiens*, or dog-men, the father's face being so covered with hair as to present a striking resemblance to the face of a Skye terrier. Andrian was thus described:—"He is about fifty-five years of age, and is said to be the son of a Russian soldier. In order to escape the derision and the unkind usage of his fellow-villagers, Andrian in early life fled to the woods, where, for some time, he lived in a cave.

During this period of seclusion he was much given to drunkenness. His mental condition does not seem to have suffered, however, and he is on the whole of a kindly and affectionate disposition. It may be of interest to state that he is an orthodox member of the Russo-Greek Church, and that, degraded as he is intellectually, he has very definite notions about heaven and the hereafter. He hopes to introduce his frightful countenance into the court of heaven, and he devotes all the money he makes, over and above his outlay for creature comforts, to purchasing the prayers of a devout community of monks in his native village, Kostroma, after his mortal career is ended. He is of medium stature, but very strongly built. His excessive capillary development is not true hair, but simply an abnormal growth of the *down* or fine hairs which usually cover nearly the entire surface of the human body. Strictly speaking, he has neither head-hair, beard, moustache, eyebrows, nor eyelashes, their place being taken by this singular growth of long silky down. In colour this is of a dirty yellow; it is about three inches in length all over the face, and feels like the hair of a Newfoundland dog. The very eyelids are covered with this long hair, while flowing locks come out of his nostrils and ears. On his body are isolated patches, strewed but not thickly with hairs one and a half to two inches long." Dr. Bertillon, of Paris, compared a hair from Andrian's chin with a very fine hair from a man's beard, and found that the latter was three times as thick as the former; and a hair from Andrian's head is only one-half as thick as an average human hair. Professor Virchow, of Berlin, made careful inquiry into the family history of Andrian Jeftich-

jew. So far as could be learned, Andrian was the first in whom this wonderful hirsuteness had been noticed. Neither his reputed father nor his mother presented any peculiarity of the kind, and a brother and sister of his, who are still living, are in no way remarkable for capillary development. The son Fedor, who was exhibited in company with Andrian, was illegitimate, and about three years of age. Andrian's legitimate children, a son and a daughter, both died young. Nothing is known of the former; but the daughter resembled the father. "Fedor is a sprightly child," said the account from which we have already quoted, "and appears more intelligent than the father. The growth of down on his face is not so heavy as to conceal his features, but there is no doubt that when the child comes to maturity he will be at least as hirsute as his parent. The hairs are as white and as soft as the fur of the Angora cat, and are longest at the outer angles of the eyes. There is a thick tuft between the eyes, and the nose is well covered. The moustache joins the whiskers on each side, after the English fashion, and this circumstance gives to accurate pictures of the child a ludicrous resemblance to a well-fed Englishman of about fifty. As in the father's case, the inside of Fedor's nostrils and ears has a thick crop of hair." "Both father and son are almost toothless, Andrian having only five teeth, one in the upper jaw and four in the lower, while the child has only four teeth, all in the lower jaw. In both cases the four lower teeth are all incisors. To the right of Andrian's one upper tooth there still remains the mark of another which has disappeared. That beyond these six teeth the man never had any others is evident to anyone who feels the gums with the finger."

The deficiency of teeth, accompanied as it is by what is in reality a deficiency not a redundancy of hair—for Andrian and his son have no real hair—accords well with Darwin's view, that a constant correlation exists between hair and teeth. He mentions as an illustration the deficiency of teeth in hairless dogs. The tusks of the boar, again, are greatly reduced under domestication, and the reduction is accompanied by a corresponding diminution of the bristles. He mentions also the case of Julia Pastrana, a Spanish dancer or opera singer, who had a thick masculine beard and a hairy forehead, while her teeth were so redundant that her mouth projected, and her face had a gorilla-like appearance. It should rather be said that in general those creatures which present an abnormal development in the covering of their skin, whether in the way of redundancy or deficiency, present generally, perhaps always, an abnormal dental development, as we see in sloths and armadillos on the one hand, which have the front teeth deficient, and in some branches of the whale family on the other, in which the teeth are redundant either in number or in size. In individual members of the human family it certainly is not always the case that the development of the hair and that of the teeth are directly correlated; for some who are bald when quite young have excellent teeth, and some who have lost most of their

teeth while still on the right side of forty have excellent hair to an advanced age.*

Another case, somewhat similar to that of Andrian and his son, is found in a Burmese family, living at Ava, and first described by Crawford in 1829. Shwe-Maong, the head of the family, was about thirty years old. His whole body was covered with silky hairs, which attained a length of nearly five inches on the shoulders and spine. He had four daughters, but only one of them resembled him. She was living at Ava in 1855, and, according to the account given by a British officer who saw her there, she had a son who was hairy like his grandfather, Shwe-Maong. The case of this family illustrates rather curiously the relation between the hair and teeth. For Shwe-Maong retained his milk-teeth till he was twenty years old (when he attained puberty), and they were replaced by nine teeth only, five in the upper and four in the lower jaw. Eight of these were incisors, the ninth (in the upper jaw) being a canine tooth.

Sex-digitism, or the possession of hands and feet with six digits each, has occurred in several families as a sudden variation from the normal formation, but after it has appeared has usually been transmitted for several generations. In the case of the Colburn family this peculiarity lasted for four generations without interruption, and still reappears occasionally. In a branch of a well-known Scotch family, sex-digitism—after continuing for three or four generations—has apparently disappeared; but it still frequently happens that the edge of the hands on the side of the little finger is partially deformed.

Hare-lip, albinism, halting, and other peculiarities, commonly reappear for four or five generations, and are seldom altogether eradicated in less than ten or twelve.

The tendency to variation shown in the introduction of these peculiarities, even though they may have been eventually eradicated, is worth noticing in its bearing on our views respecting the formation of new and persistent varieties of the human as of other races. It must be noticed that in the case of the human race the conditions not only do not favour the continuance of such varieties, but practically forbid their persistence. It is otherwise with some varieties, at least, of domestic animals, inasmuch that varieties which present any noteworthy even though accidentally observed advantage have been made practically persistent; we say practically, because there seems little reason to doubt that in every case which has hitherto been observed the normal type would eventually be

* Shakspeare, who was bald young (and, so far as one can judge from his portraits, had a good set of teeth), suggests a correlation between hairiness and want of wit, which is at least likely to be regarded by those who "wear his baldness while they're young" as a sound theory. "Why," asks Antipholus of Syracuse, "is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement?" "Because," says Dromio of Syracuse, "it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts; and what he hath scantied men in hair he hath given them in wit."

reverted to if special pains were not taken to separate the normal from the abnormal form.

An excellent illustration of the difference between the human race and a race of animals under domestication, in this particular respect, is found in the case of the Kelleia family on the one hand, and that of the Ancon or Otter sheep on the other.

The former case is described by Réaumur. A Maltese couple named Kelleia, whose hands and feet were of the ordinary type, had a son Gratio who had six movable fingers on each hand and six somewhat less perfect toes on each foot. Gratio Kelleia married a woman possessing only the ordinary number of fingers and toes. There were four children of this marriage—Salvator, George, André, and Marie. Salvator had six fingers and six toes like the father; George and André had each five fingers and five toes like the mother, but the hands and feet of George were slightly deformed; Marie had five fingers and five toes, but her thumbs were slightly deformed. All four children grew up, and married folk with the ordinary number of fingers and toes. The children of André alone (who were many) were without exception of the normal type, like their father. The children of Salvator, who alone was six-fingered and six-toed like Gratio the grandfather, were four in number; three of them resembled the father, while the other—the youngest—was of the normal type like his mother and grandmother. As these four children were the descendants of four grandparents of whom one only was hexadactylic, we see that the variety had been strong enough in their case to overcome the normal type in threefold greater strength. But the strangest part of the story is that relating to George and Marie. George, who was a pentadactyle, though somewhat deformed about the hands and feet, was the father of four children: first two girls, both purely hexadactylic; next a girl, hexadactylic on the right side of the body and pentadactylic on the left side; and lastly a boy, purely pentadactylic. Marie, a pentadactyle with deformed thumbs, gave birth to a boy with six toes, and three normally formed children. It will be seen, however, that the normal type showed itself in greater force than the variety in the third generation from Gratio; for while one child of Salvator's, one of George's, three of Marie's, and all of André's (some seven or eight) were of the normal type—twelve or thirteen in all—only five, viz. three of Salvator's and two of George's, presented the variety purely. Three others were more or less abnormally formed in fingers and toes; but even counting these, the influence of the variety was shown only in eight of the grandchildren of Gratio, whereas twelve or thirteen were of the normal type.

The story of the Ancon or Otter sheep, as narrated by Colonel David Humphreys in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks published in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1813, has been thus abridged by Huxley:—"It appears that one Seth Wright, the proprietor of a farm on the banks of the Charles River, in Massachusetts, possessed a flock of fifteen ewes and a ram of the ordinary kind. In the year 1791 one of the ewes presented

her owner with a male lamb differing, for no assignable reason, from its parents by a disproportionately long body and short bandy legs; whence it was unable to emulate its relatives in those sportive leaps over the neighbours' fences in which they were in the habit of indulging, much to the good farmer's vexation. With the 'cuteness' characteristic of their nation, the neighbours of the Massachusetts farmer imagined it would be an excellent thing if all his sheep were imbued with the stay-at-home tendencies enforced by Nature upon the newly-arrived ram; and they advised Wright to kill the old patriarch of his fold and instal the new Ancon ram in his place. The result justified their sagacious anticipations. . . . The young lambs were almost always either pure Ancons or pure ordinary sheep. But when sufficient Ancon sheep were obtained to interbreed with one another, it was found that the offspring were always pure Ancon. Colonel Humphreys, in fact, states that he was acquainted with only 'one questionable case of a contrary nature.' By taking care to select Ancons of both sexes for breeding from, it thus became easy to establish an exceedingly well-marked race—so peculiar that even when herded with other sheep, it was noted that the Ancons kept together. And there is every reason to believe that the existence of this breed might have been indefinitely protracted; but the introduction of the Merino sheep—which were not only very superior to the Ancons in wool and meat, but quite as quiet and orderly—led to the complete neglect of the new breed, so that in 1813 Colonel Humphreys found it difficult to obtain the specimen whose skeleton was presented to Sir Joseph Banks. We believe that for many years no remnant of it has existed in the United States."

It is easy, as Huxley remarks, to understand why, whereas Gratio Kelleia did not become the ancestor of a race of six-fingered and six-toed men, Seth Wright's Ancon ram became a nation of long-bodied short-legged sheep. If the purely hexadactylic descendants of Gratio Kelleia, and all the purely hexadactylic members of the Colburn family, in the third and fourth generations, had migrated to some desert island, and had been careful not only to exclude all visitors having the normal number of fingers and toes, but to send away before the age of puberty all children of their own which might depart in any degree from the pure hexadactylic type, there can be no doubt that under favourable conditions the colony would have become a nation of six-fingered folk. Among such a nation the duodecimal system of notation would flourish, and some remarkable performers on the pianoforte, flute, and other instruments, might be looked for; but we do not know that they would possess any other advantage over their pentadactylic contemporaries. Seeing that the system of colonising above described is antecedently unlikely, and that no special advantage could be derived from the persistence of any hitherto known abnormal variety of the human race, it is unlikely that for many generations yet to come we shall hear of six-fingered, hairy-faced, horny-skinned, or hare-lipped nations. The only peculiarities

which have any chance of becoming permanent are such as, while not very uncommon, stand in the way of intermarriage with persons not similarly affected. A similar remark, as will presently appear, applies to mental and moral characteristics. The law according to which contrast is found attractive and similitude repugnant, though wide in its range, is not universal; and there are cases in which resemblance, if it has not the charm found (under ordinary circumstances) in contrast, is yet a necessary element in matrimonial alliances.

The inheritance of constitutional traits comes next to be considered. It is probably not less frequently observed, and is in several respects more interesting than the inheritance of peculiarities of bodily configuration.

Longevity, which may be regarded as measuring the aggregate constitutional energy, is well known to be hereditary in certain families, as is short duration of life in other families. The best proof that this is the case is found in the action of insurance companies, in ascertaining through their agents the longevity of the ancestors of persons proposing to insure their lives. Instances of longevity during several successive generations are too common to be worth citing. Cases in which, for generation after generation, a certain age, far short of the threescore years and ten, has not been passed, even when all the circumstances have favoured longevity, are more interesting. One of the most curious among these is the case of the Turgot family, in which the age of fifty-nine had not been for generations exceeded, to the time when Turgot made the name famous. At the age of fifty, when he was in excellent health, and apparently had promise of many years of life, he expressed to his friends his conviction that the end of his life was near at hand. From that time forward he held himself prepared for death, and, as we know, he died before he had completed his fifty-fourth year.

Fecundity is associated sometimes with longevity, but in other cases as significantly associated with short duration of life. Of families in which many children are born but few survive, we naturally have less striking evidence than we have of families in which many children of strong constitutions are born for several successive generations. What may be called the fecundity of the short-lived is a quality commonly leading in no long time to the disappearance of the family in which it makes its appearance. It is the reverse, of course, with fecundity in families whose members show individually great vigour of constitution and high vital power. Ribot mentions several cases of this sort among the families of the old French *noblesse*. Thus Anne de Montmorency—who, despite his feminine name, was certainly by no means feminine in character—at the battle of St. Denis, in his sixty-sixth year, he smashed with his sword the teeth of the Scotch soldier who was giving him his death blow—was the father of twelve children. Three of his ancestors, Matthew I., Matthew II., and Matthew III., had in all eighteen children, of whom fifteen were boys. “The son and grandson of the great Condé

had nineteen between them, and their great-grandfather, who lost his life at Jarnac, had ten. The first four Guises reckoned in all forty-three children, of whom thirty were boys. Achille de Harley had nine children, his father ten, and his great-grandfather eighteen." In the family of the Herschels in Hanover and in England, a similar fecundity has been shown in two generations out of three. Sir W. Herschel was one of a family of twelve children, of whom five were sons. He himself did not marry till his fiftieth year, and had only one son. But Sir John Herschel was the father of eleven children.

Of constitutional peculiarities those affecting the nervous system are most frequently transmitted. We do not, however, consider them at this point, because they are viewed ordinarily rather as they relate to mental and moral characteristics than as affections of the body. The bodily affections most commonly transmitted are those depending on what is called diathesis—a general state or disposition of the constitution predisposing to some special disease. Such are scrofula, cancer, tubercular consumption, gout, arthritis, and some diseases specially affecting the skin. This would not be the place for a discussion of this particular part of our subject, interesting though it undoubtedly is. But it may be worth while to note that we have, in the variety of forms in which the same constitutional bad quality may present itself, evidence that what is actually transmitted is not a peculiarity affecting a particular organ, even though in several successive generations the disease may show itself in the same part of the body, but an affection of the constitution generally. We have here an answer to the question asked by Montaigne in the essay from which we have already quoted. The essay was written soon after he had, for the first time, experienced the pangs of renal calculus:—"Tis to be believed," he says, "that I derived this infirmity from my father, for he died wonderfully tormented" with it; he was "never sensible of his disease till the sixty-seventh year of his age, and before that had never felt any grudging or symptom of it" . . . "but lived till then in a happy vigorous state of health, little subject to infirmities, and continued seven years after in this disease, and dyed a very painful death. I was born about twenty-five years before his disease seized him, and in the time of his most flourishing and healthful state of body, his third child in order of birth: where could his propension to this malady lie lurking all that while? And he being so far from the infirmity, how could that small part of his substance carry away so great an impression of its share? And how so concealed that, till five-and-forty years after, I did not begin to be sensible of it? being the only one to this hour, amongst so many brothers and sisters, and all of one mother, that was ever troubled with it. He that can satisfy me in this point, I will believe him in as many other miracles as he pleases, always provided that, as their manner is, he does not give me a doctrine much more intricate and fantastic than the thing itself, for current pay." When we note, however, that in many cases the children of persons

affected like the elder Montaigne are not affected like the parents, but with other infirmities, as the tendency to gout, and *vice versa* (a circumstance of which the writer of these lines has but too good reason to be cognisant, a parent's tendency to gout having in his case been transmitted in the modified but even more troublesome form of the disease which occasioned Montaigne so much anguish), we perceive that it is not "some small part of the substance" which transmits its condition to the child, but the general state of the constitution. Moreover, it may be hoped in many cases (which would scarcely be the case if the condition or qualities of some part of the body only were transmitted) that the germs of disease, or rather the predisposition to disease, may be greatly diminished, or even entirely eradicated, by suitable precautions. Thus persons inheriting a tendency to consumption have become, in many cases, vigorous and healthy by passing as much of their time as possible in the open air, by avoiding crowded and over-heated rooms, taking moderate but regular exercise, judicious diet, and so forth. We believe that the disease which troubled the last fifteen years of the life of Montaigne might readily have been prevented, and the tendency to it eradicated, during his youth.

Let us turn, however, from these considerations to others more interesting, though less important, and on the whole better suited to these pages.

The inheritance of tricks of habit is one of the most perplexing of all the phenomena of heredity. The less striking the habit, the more remarkable, perhaps, is its persistence as an inherited trait. Giron de Buzareingues states that he knew a man who, when he lay on his back, was wont to throw his right leg across the left; one of this person's daughters had the same habit from her birth, constantly assuming that position in the cradle, notwithstanding the resistance offered by the swaddling bands.* Darwin mentions another case in his *Variation of*

* While penning the above lines the writer has been reminded of an experience of his own, which he had never before thought of, connected with the subject of heredity; yet it seems not unlikely that it may be regarded as a case in point. During the infancy of his eldest son, it so chanced that the question of rest at night, and consequently the question of finding some convenient way of keeping the child quiet, became one of considerable interest to him. Cradle-rocking was effective, but carried on in the usual way prevented his own sleep, though causing the child to sleep. He devised, however, a way of rocking the cradle with the foot, which could be carried on in his sleep, after a few nights' practice. Now it is an odd coincidence (only, perhaps) that the writer's next child, a girl, had while still an infant a trick which we have noticed in no other case. She would rock herself in the cradle by throwing the right leg over the left at regular intervals, the swing of the cradle being steadily kept up for many minutes, and being quite as wide in range as a nurse could have given. It was often continued when the child was asleep.

Since writing the above, the writer has learned from his eldest daughter, the girl who as a child had the habit described, that a recent little brother of hers, one of twins, and remarkably like her, has the same habit, rocking his own cradle so vigor-

Animals and Plants under Domestication:—A child had the odd habit of setting its fingers in rapid motion whenever it was particularly pleased with anything. When greatly excited, the same child would raise the hand on both sides as high as the eyes, with the fingers in rapid motion as before. Even in old age he experienced a difficulty in refraining from these gestures. He had eight children, one of whom, a little girl, when four years of age, used to set her fingers going, and to lift up her hands after the manner of her father. A still more remarkable case is described by Galton. A gentleman's wife noticed that when he lay fast asleep on his back in bed he had the curious trick of raising his right arm slowly in front of his face, up to his forehead, and then dropping it with a jerk, so that the wrist fell heavily on the bridge of his nose. The trick did not occur every night, but occasionally, and was independent of any ascertained cause. Sometimes it was repeated incessantly for an hour or more. The gentleman's nose was prominent, and its bridge often became sore from blows which it received. At one time an awkward sore was produced that was long in healing, on account of the recurrence, night after night, of the blows which first caused it. His wife had to remove the button from the wrist of his night-gown, as it made severe scratches, and some means were attempted of tying his arm. Many years after his death, his son married a lady who had never heard of the family incident. She, however, observed precisely the same peculiarity in her husband; but his nose, from not being particularly prominent, has never as yet suffered from the blows. The trick does not occur when he is half asleep, as, for example, when he is dozing in his arm-chair; but the moment he is fast asleep, he is apt to begin. It is, as with his father, intermittent; sometimes ceasing for many nights, and sometimes almost incessant during a part of every night. It is performed, as it was with his father, with his right hand. One of his children, a girl, has inherited the same trick. She performs it, likewise, with the right hand, but in a slightly modified form; for after raising the arm, she does not allow the wrist to drop upon the bridge of the nose, but the palm of the half-closed hand falls over and down the nose, striking it rather rapidly—a decided improvement on the father's and grandfather's idea. The trick is intermittent in this girl's case also, sometimes not occurring for periods of some months, but sometimes almost incessantly.

Strength in particular limbs or muscles is often transmitted hereditarily. So also is skill in special exercises. Thus in the north country there are families of famous wrestlers. Among professional oarsmen, again, we may note such cases as the Clasper family in the north, the Mackinneys in the south; while among amateur oarsmen we have the

ously as to disturb her sleeping in the next room with the noise. These two only of twelve children have had this curious habit; but as he is thirteen years younger than she is, the force of the coincidence in point of time is to some degree impaired.

case of the Playford family, to which the present amateur champion sculler belongs. In cricket, the Walker family and the Grace family may be cited among amateurs, the Humphreys among professional players. Grace in dancing was transmitted for three generations in the Vestris family. It must, however, be noted that in some of these cases we may fairly consider that example and teaching have had much to do with the result. Take rowing for instance. A good oarsman will impart his style to a whole crew if he rows stroke for them; and even if he only trains them (as Morrison, for instance, trained the Cambridge crew a few years ago), he will make good oarsmen of men suitably framed and possessing ordinary aptitude for rowing. We remember well how a famous stroke-oar at Cambridge imparted to one at least of the University crew (a fellow-collegian of his, and therefore rowing with him constantly also in his College boat) so exact an imitation of his style that one rather dusky evening, when the latter was "stroking" a scratch four past a throng of University men, a dispute arose as to which of the two was really stroke of the four. Anyone who knows how characteristic commonly is the rowing of any first-class stroke, and still more anyone who chances to know how peculiar was the style of the University "stroke-oar" referred to, will understand how closely his style must have been adopted, when experienced oarsmen, not many yards from the passing four, were unable to decide at once which of the two men were rowing,—even though the evening was dusky enough to prevent the features of the stroke (whose face was not fully in view at the moment) from being discerned. Seeing that a first-rate oarsman can thus communicate his style so perfectly to another, it cannot be regarded as demonstrably a case of hereditary transmission if the Claspers rowed in the same style as their father, or if the present champion sculler (making allowances for the change introduced by the sliding seat) rows very much like his father and his uncle.

Some peculiarities, such as stammering, lisping, babbling, and the like, are not easily referable to any special class of hereditary traits, because it is not clear how far they are to be regarded as depending on bodily or how far on mental peculiarities. It might seem obvious that stammering was in most cases uncontrollable by the will, and babbling might seem as certainly controllable. Yet there are cases which throw doubt on either conclusion. Thus, Dr. Lucas tells us of a servant-maid whose loquacity was apparently quite uncontrollable. She would talk to people till they were ready to faint; and if there were no human being to listen to her, she would talk to animals and inanimate objects, or would talk aloud to herself. She had to be discharged. "But," she said to her master, "I am not to blame; it all comes from my father. He had the same fault, and it drove my mother to distraction; and his father was just the same." Stammering has been transmitted through as many as five generations. The same has been noticed of peculiarities of vision. The Montmorency look, a sort of half squint, affected nearly

all the members of the Montmorency family. The peculiarity called Daltonism, an inability to distinguish between certain colours of the spectrum, was not so named, as is often asserted, merely because the distinguished chemist Dalton was affected by it, but because three members of the same family were similarly affected. Deafness and blindness are not commonly hereditary where the parents have lost sight or hearing either by accident or through illness, even though the illness or accident occur during infancy; but persons born either blind or deaf frequently if not commonly transmit the defect to some at least among their offspring. Similar remarks apply to deaf-muteness.

The senses of taste and smell must also be included in the list of those which are affected by transmitted peculiarities. If we include the craving for liquor among such peculiarities, we might at once cite a long list of cases; but this craving must be regarded as *nervo-psychical*, the sense of taste having in reality very little to do with it. It is doubtful how the following hideous instance should be classed. It is related by Dr. Lucas. "A man in Scotland had an irresistible desire to eat human flesh. He had a daughter. Although removed from her father and mother, who were both sent to the stake before she was a year old, and although brought up among respectable people, this girl, like her father, yielded to the horrible craving for human flesh." He must be an ardent student of physiological science who regrets that at this stage circumstances intervened which prevented the world from ascertaining whether the peculiarity would have descended to the third and fourth generations.

Amongst the strangest cases of hereditary transmission are those relating to handwriting. Darwin cites several curious instances in his *Variation of Plants and Animals under Domestication*. "On what a curious combination of corporeal structure, mental character, and training," he remarks, "must handwriting depend. Yet everyone must have noted the occasional close similarity of the handwriting in father and son, even although the father had not taught the son. A great collector of franks assured me that in his collection there were several franks of father and son hardly distinguishable except by their dates." Hofacker, in Germany, remarks on the inheritance of handwriting; and it has been even asserted that English boys, when taught to write in France, naturally cling to their English manner of writing. Dr. Carpenter mentions the following instance as having occurred in his own family, as showing that the character of the handwriting is independent of the special teaching which the right hand receives in this art:—"A gentleman who emigrated to the United States, and settled in the backwoods, before the end of last century, was accustomed from time to time to write long letters to his sister in England, giving an account of his family affairs. Having lost his right arm by an accident, the correspondence was temporarily kept up by one or other of his children; but in the course of a few months he learned to write with his left hand, and,

before long, the handwriting of the letters thus written came to be indistinguishable from that of his former letters."

We had occasion, two or three years ago, to consider in these pages, in an article on "Strange Mental Feats," the question of inherited mental qualities and artistic habits, and would refer the reader for some remarkable instances of transmitted powers to that article.* Galton, in his work on *Hereditary Genius*, and Ribot, in his treatise on *Heredity*, have collected many facts bearing on this interesting question. Both writers show a decided bias in favour of a view which would give to heredity a rather too important position among the factors of genius. Cases are cited which seem very little to the purpose, and multitudes of instances are omitted which oppose themselves, at a first view at any rate, to the belief that heredity plays the first part in the genesis of great minds. Nearly all the greatest names in philosophy, literature, and science, and a great number of the greatest names in art, stand absolutely alone. We know nothing achieved by Shakspeare's father or grandfather, or by Goethe's, or Schiller's. None of Newton's family were in any way distinguished in mathematical or scientific work; nor do we know of a distinguished Laplace, or Lagrange, or Lavoisier, or Harvey, or Dalton, or Volta, or Faraday, besides those who made these names illustrious. As to general literature, page after page might be filled with the mere names of those whose ancestry has been quite undistinguished. To say that among the ancestors of Goethe, Schiller, Byron, and so forth, certain qualities—virtues or vices, passions or insensibilities to passion—may be recognised, "among the ancestors of men of science certain aptitudes for special subjects or methods of research," among the ancestors of philosophers and literary men certain qualities or capabilities, and that such ancestral peculiarities determined the poetic, scientific, or literary genius of the descendant, is in reality to little purpose, for there is probably not a single family possessing claims to culture in any civilised country, among the members of which individuals might not be found with qualities thus emphasised, so to speak. Such *à posteriori* reasoning is valueless. If instances could be so classified that after carefully studying them we could make even the roughest approach to a guess respecting the cases in which a family might be expected to produce men of any particular qualities, there would be some use in these attempts at generalisation. At present all that can be said is that some mental qualities and some artistic aptitudes have unquestionably in certain instances been transmitted, and that on the whole men of great distinction in philosophy, literature, science, and art, are rather more likely than others to have among their relations (more or less remote) persons somewhat above the average in mental or artistic qualities. But it is not altogether certain that this superiority is even quite so great as it might be expected to be if hereditary transmission played no part at all in the

* See CORNHILL MAGAZINE for August, 1875.

matter. For it cannot be denied that a great mathematician's son has rather a better chance than others of being a mathematician, a great author's son of being a writer, a great artist's son of being skilful in art, a great philosopher's son of taking philosophic views of things. Nearly every son looks forward while still young to the time when he shall be doing his father's work; nearly every father hopes while his children are yet young that some at least among them will take up his work. The fact that so few sons of great men do follow in their fathers' footsteps shows that, despite the strong ambition of the son, the anxious hope of the father, the son in the majority of instances has not had ability even to take a fairly good position in the work wherein the father has been perhaps pre-eminently distinguished.

We have said that certain mental qualities have certainly been transmitted in some cases. Galton mentions one noteworthy instance relating to memory. In the family of Porson good memory was so notable a faculty as to give rise to the byword, "the Porson memory." Lady Hester Stanhope, says the late F. Papillon, "she whose life was so full of adventure, gives, as one among many points of resemblance between herself and her grandfather, her retentive memory. 'I have my grandfather's grey eyes,' said she, 'and his memory of places. If he saw a stone on the road, he remembered it; it is the same with myself. His eye, which was ordinarily dull and lustreless, was lighted up, like my own, with a dull gleam whenever he was seized with passion.'"

In endeavouring to form an opinion on the law of heredity in its relation to genius, we must remember that a remark somewhat similar to one made by Huxley respecting the origin of new species applies to the origin of a man of genius. Before he became celebrated no one cared particularly to inquire about his ancestry or relations; when his fame was established, the time for making the inquiry had passed away. It is quite possible that, if we had exact and full information, in a great number of cases, we might find the position taken up by Mr. Galton and M. Ribot greatly strengthened; it is, however, also possible that we might find it much weakened, not only by the recognition of a multitude of cases in which the approach of a great man was in no sort indicated by scintillations of brightness along the genealogical track, but by a yet greater number of cases in which families containing numbers of clever, witty, and learned folks have produced none who attained real distinction.

There is an excellent remark in a thoughtful but anonymous paper on Heredity in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, two years or so ago, which suggests some considerations well worth noting. "If we look," says the writer, "on the intellect as not a single force but a complex of faculties, we shall find little to perplex us in the phenomenon of spontaneity"—that is (in this case), in the appearance of a man of genius in a family not before remarkable in any way. "Suppose a family who have possessed some of the attributes of greatness, but who, in virtue of a prin-

ciple equally true in psychology and in mechanics, that 'nothing is stronger than its weakest part,' has remained in obscurity. Let a man of this family marry a woman whose faculties are the complement of his own. It is possible that a child of such a couple may combine the defects or weaknesses of both parents, and we have then the case of spontaneous imbecility or criminality. But it is also possible that he may combine the excellences of both, and burst upon the world as a spontaneous genius. . . . Again, we must remember that, even if we consider the intellect as 'one and indivisible,' it is far from being the only faculty needful for the attainment of excellence, even in the fields of pure science. Combined with it there must be the moral faculties of patience, perseverance, and concentration. The will must be strong enough to overcome all distracting temptations, whether in themselves good or evil. Lastly, there must be constitutional energy and endurance. Failing these, the man will merely leave among his friends the conviction that he might have achieved greatness, if—— We once knew a physician, resident in a small country town, who from time to time startled his associates by some profound and suggestive idea, some brilliant *aperçu*. But a constitutional languor prevented him from ever completing an investigation, or from leaving the world one written line."

The effect of circumstances also must not be overlooked. It is certain that some of those who stand highest in the world's repute would have done nothing to make their names remembered but for circumstances which either aided their efforts or compelled them to exertion; and it cannot be doubted, therefore, that many who have been by no means celebrated have required but favouring opportunities or the spur of adverse circumstances to have achieved distinction. We note the cases in which men who have been intended by their parents for the desk or routine work have fortunately been freed for nobler work, to which their powers have specially fitted them. But we are apt to forget that for each such case there must be many instances in which no fortunate chance has intervened. The theory that genius *will* make its way, despite all obstacles, is much like such popular notions as that "murder will out," and the like. We note when events happen which favour such notions, but we not only do not note—in the very nature of things it is impossible that we should have the chance of noting—cases unfavourable to a notion which, after all, is but a part of the general and altogether erroneous idea that what we think ought to be, will be. That among millions of men in a civilised community, trained under multitudinous conditions, for divers professions, trades, and so forth, exposed to many vicissitudes of fortune, good and bad, there should be men from time to time

Who break their birth's invidious bar,
And grasp the skirts of happy chance,
And breast the blows of circumstance,
And grapple with their evil star

is no truer proof of the general theory that genius will make its mark, despite circumstance, than is the occasional occurrence of strange instances in which murder has been detected, despite seemingly perfect precaution.

It must, however, be in a general sense admitted that mental powers, like bodily powers, are inherited. If the ancestry of men of genius could be traced, we should in each case probably find enough, in the history of some line at least along which descent could be traced, to account for the possession of special powers, and enough in the history of that and other lines of descent to account for the other qualities or characteristics which, combined with those special powers, gave to the man's whole nature the capacity by which he was enabled to stand above the average level of his fellow-men. We might, with knowledge at once wider and deeper than we actually possess of the various families of each nation, and their relationships, predict in many cases, not that any given child would prove a genius, but that some one or other of a family would probably rise to distinction. To predict the advent of a man of great genius as we predict the approach of an eclipse or a transit, will doubtless never be in men's power; but it is conceivable that at some perhaps not very remote epoch, anticipations may be formed somewhat like those which astronomers are able to make respecting the recurrence of meteoric showers at particular times and seasons, and visible in particular regions. Already we know so much as this, that in certain races of men only can special forms of mental energy, like special bodily characteristics, be expected to appear. It may well be that hereafter such anticipations may be limited to special groups of families.

When we pass from mental to moral qualities, we find ourselves in the presence of problems which could not be thoroughly dealt with in these pages. The general question, how far the moral characteristics of each person born into the world depends on those of the parents, or more generally of the ancestry, is one involving many considerations which, perhaps unfortunately, have been associated with religious questions. And apart from this, the answers to this question have been found to have a very wide range—from the opinion of those who (like Miss Martineau) consider that our characters, even where they seem to undergo changes resulting from the exercise of will are entirely due to inheritance, to the view of those who consider, like Heinroth, that no moral characteristic can possibly be regarded as inherited in such sort as to modify either responsibility for evil-doing or credit for well-doing. Probably most will be content to accept a view between these extremes, without too nicely considering how far moral responsibility is affected by the influence of inherited tendencies.

There are, however, some illustrations relating to exceptional habits, which may be mentioned here, without bringing in the general question.

We have not referred to insanity in speaking of inherited mental qualities, because insanity must be regarded as a disease of the moral

rather than of the mental nature. Its origin may be in the mind, as the origin of mental diseases is in the brain, that is, in the body; but the principal manifestations of insanity, those which must guide us in determining its true position, are unquestionably those relating to moral habitudes. Insanity is not always, or at least not always demonstrably, hereditary. Esquirol found among 1,375 lunatics 337 unquestionable cases of hereditary transmission. Guislain and others regard hereditary lunacy as including, roughly, one-fourth of the cases of insanity. Moreau and others hold that the proportion is greater. It appears, however, that mental alienation is not the only form in which the insanity of an ancestor may manifest itself. Dr. Morel gives the following instructive illustration of the "varied and odd complications occurring in the hereditary transmission of nervous disease." He attended four brothers belonging to one family. The grandfather of these children had died insane; their father had never been able to continue long at anything; their uncle, a man of great intellect and a distinguished physician, was noted for his eccentricities. Now these four children, sprung from one stock, presented very different forms of physical disorder. One of them was a maniac, whose wild paroxysms occurred periodically. The disorder of the second was melancholy madness; he was reduced by his stupor to a merely automatic condition. The third was characterised by an extreme irascibility and suicidal disposition. The fourth manifested a strong liking for art; but he was of a timorous and suspicious nature. This story seems in some degree to give support to the theory that genius and mental aberration are not altogether alien; that, in fact,

Great wit to madness nearly is allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

Of the hereditary transmission of idiocy we naturally have not the same kind of evidence. The madness often, if not generally, comes on or shows itself late in life, whereas idiocy is not often developed in the adult. Insanity is the diseased or weakened condition of a mind possessing all the ordinary thinking faculties; idiocy implies that some of these faculties are altogether wanting. It has been asserted, by the way, that idiocy is a product of civilisation. The civilised "present, as peoples," says Dr. Duncan, "indications of defective vital force, which are not witnessed among those human beings that live in a state of nature. There must be something rotten in some parts of our boasted civilisation; and not only a something which has to do with our psychology, but a great deal more with our power of physical persistence. It is a fact that the type of the perfect minded, just above the highest idiots, or the simpletons, is more distinguishable amongst the most civilised of the civilised than among those who are the so-called children of nature. Dolts, boobies, stupids, *et hoc genus omne*, abound in young Saxondom; but their representatives are rare amongst the tribes that are slowly disappearing before the white man." But it seems barely possible that the difference may be

due to the care with which civilised communities interfere to prevent the elimination of idiot infants by the summary process of destroying them. The writer from whom I have just quoted refers to the fact that, even under the Roman Empire, as during the Republic, idiots were looked upon as "useless entities by the practical Roman." They had no sanctity in his eyes, and hence their probable rarity; doubtless the unfortunate children were neglected, and there is much reason for believing that they were "exposed." "A congenital idiot soon begins to give trouble," proceeds Dr. Duncan, "and to excite unusual attention; and, moreover, unless extra care is given to it, death is sure to ensue in early childhood." May not idiot children in savage communities have an even worse chance of survival than under the Roman Empire? and may not dolts, boobies, and stupids, *et hoc genus omne*, among savages, have such inferior chances in the infantine and later in the adult struggle for existence, that we may explain thus the comparative rarity of these varieties in savage communities? It certainly does not seem to have been proved as yet that civilisation *per se* is favourable to the development of insanity.

The liking for strong drink, as is too well known, is often transmitted. It is remarked by Dr. Howe that "the children of drunkards are deficient in bodily and vital energy, and are predisposed by their very organisation to have cravings for alcoholic stimulants. If they pursue the course of their fathers, which they have more temptation to follow and less power to avoid than the children of the temperate, they add to their hereditary weakness, and increase the tendency to idiocy or insanity in their constitution; and this they leave to their children after them." Whatever opinion we may form on the general question of responsibility for offences of commission or of omission, on this special point all who are acquainted with the facts must agree, admitting that in some cases of inherited craving for alcoholic stimulants the responsibility of those who have failed and fallen in the struggle has been but small. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Robert Collyer, of Chicago, in his noble sermon "The Thorn in the Flesh," has well said, "In the far-reaching influences that go to every life, and away backward as certainly as forward, children are sometimes born with appetites fatally strong in their nature. As they grow up, the appetite grows with them, and speedily becomes a master—the master a tyrant; and by the time he arrives at manhood, the man is a slave. I heard a man say that for eight-and-twenty years the soul within him had had to stand, like an unsleeping sentinel, guarding his appetite for strong drink. To be a man at last, under such a disadvantage—not to mention a saint—is as fine a piece of grace as can well be seen. There is no doctrine that demands a larger vision than this of the depravity of human nature. Old Dr. Mason used to say, that 'as much grace as would make John a saint, would hardly keep Peter from knocking a man down.'"

There are some curious stories of special vices transmitted from parent

to child, which, if true, are exceedingly significant, to say the least.* Gama Machado relates that a lady with whom he was acquainted, who possessed a large fortune, had a passion for gambling, and passed whole nights at play. "She died young," he proceeds, "of a pulmonary complaint. Her eldest son, who was in appearance the image of his mother, had the same passion for play. He died of consumption, like his mother, and at the same age. His daughter, who resembled him, inherited the same tastes, and died young." Hereditary predisposition to theft, murder, and suicide, has been demonstrated in several cases. But the world at large is naturally indisposed to recognise congenital tendency to crime as largely diminishing responsibility for offences or attempted offences of this kind. So far as the general interests of the community are concerned, the demonstrated fact that a thief or murderer has inherited his unpleasant tendency should be a *raison de plus* for preventing the tendency from being transmitted any farther. In stamping out the hereditary ruffian or rascal by life imprisonment, we not only get rid of the "grown serpent," but of the worm which

Hath nature that in time would venom breed.

An illustration of the policy at least (we do not say the justice) of preventive measures in such cases, is shown in the case of a woman in America, of whom the world may fairly say what Father Paul remarked to gentle Alice Brown: it "never knew so criminal a family as her's." A young woman of remarkably depraved character infested, some seventy years since, the district of the Upper Hudson. At one stage of her youth she narrowly, and somewhat unfortunately, escaped death. Surviving, however, she bore many children, who in turn had large families, inasmuch that there are now some eighty direct descendants, of whom one-fourth are convicted criminals, whilst the rest are drunkards, lunatics, paupers, and otherwise undesirable members of the community.

With facts such as these before us, we cannot doubt that in whatever degree variability may eliminate after awhile peculiar mental or moral tendencies, these are often transmitted for many generations before they die out. If it be unsafe to argue that the responsibility of those inherit-

* The following statement from the researches of Brown-Sequard seems well worth noting in this connection:—"In the course of his masterly experimental investigations into the functions of the nervous system, he discovered that, after a particular lesion of the spinal cord of guinea-pigs, a slight pinching of the skin of the face would throw the animal into a kind of epileptic convulsion. That this artificial epilepsy should be constantly producible in guinea-pigs, and not in any other animals experimented on, was in itself sufficiently singular; and it was not less surprising that the tendency to it persisted after the lesion of the spinal cord seemed to have been entirely recovered from. But it was far more wonderful that the offspring of these epileptic guinea-pigs showed the same predisposition, without having been themselves subjected to any lesion whatever; whilst no such tendency showed itself in any of the large number of young bred by the same accurate observer from parents that had not thus been operated on."

ing special characteristics is diminished, the duties of others towards them may justly be considered to be modified. Other duties than the mere personal control of tendencies which men may recognise in themselves are also introduced. If a man finds within himself an inherent tendency towards some sin, which yet he utterly detests, inasmuch that while the spirit is willing the flesh is weak, or perchance utterly powerless, he must recognise in his own life a struggle too painful and too hopeless to be handed down to others. As regards our relations to families in which criminal tendencies have been developed, either through the negligence of those around (as in certain dens in London where for centuries crime has swarmed and multiplied), or by unfortunate alliances, we may "perceive here a divided duty." It has been remarked that "we do not set ourselves to train tigers and wolves into peaceful domestic animals; we seek to extirpate them;" and the question has been asked, "Why should we act otherwise with beings who, if human in form, are worse than wild beasts?" "To educate the son of a garotter or a 'corner-man' into an average Englishman," may be "about as promising a task as to train one of the latter into a Newton or a Milton." But we must not too quickly despair of a task which may be regarded as a duty inherited from those who in past generations neglected it. There is no hope of the reversion of tiger or wolf to less savage types, for, far back as we can trace their ancestry, we find them savage of nature. With our criminal families the case is not so utterly hopeless. Extirpation being impossible (though easily talked of) without injustice which would be the parent of far greater troubles even than our criminal classes bring upon us, we should consider the elements of hope which the problem unquestionably affords. By making it the manifest interest of our criminal population to scatter, or, failing that, by leaving them no choice in the matter, the poison in their blood may before many generations be eradicated, not by wide-spreading merely, but because of the circumstance that the better sort among them would have (when scattered) the better chance of rearing families as well as of escaping imprisonment.

Jes Triplex.

THE changes wrought by death are in themselves so sharp and final, and so terrible and melancholy in their consequences, that the thing stands alone in man's experience, and has no parallel upon earth. It outdoes all other accidents because it is the last of them. Sometimes it leaps suddenly upon its victims, like a Thug; sometimes it lays a regular siege and creeps upon their citadel during a score of years. And when the business is done, there is sore havoc made in other people's lives, and a pin knocked out by which many subsidiary friendships hung together. There are empty chairs, solitary walks and single beds at night. Again, in taking away our friends, death does not take them away utterly, but leaves behind a mocking, tragical, and soon intolerable residue, which must be hurriedly concealed. Hence a whole chapter of sights and customs striking to the mind, from the pyramids of Egypt to the gibbets and dule-trees of mediæval Europe. The poorest persons have a bit of pageant going towards the tomb; memorial stones are set up over the least memorable; and, in order to preserve some show of respect for what remains of our old loves and friendships, we must accompany it with much grimly ludicrous ceremonial, and the hired undertaker parades before the door. All this, and much more of the same sort, accompanied by the eloquence of poets, has gone a great way to put humanity in error; nay, in many philosophies the error has been embodied and laid down with every circumstance of logic; although in real life the bustle and swiftness, in leaving people little time to think, have not left them time enough to go dangerously wrong in practice.

As a matter of fact, although few things are spoken of with more fearful whisperings than this prospect of death, few have less influence on conduct under healthy circumstances. We have all heard of cities in South America built upon the side of fiery mountains, and how, even in this tremendous neighbourhood, the inhabitants are not a jot more impressed by the solemnity of mortal conditions than if they were delving gardens in the greenest corner of England. There are serenades and suppers and much gallantry among the myrtles overhead; and meanwhile the foundation shudders underfoot, the bowels of the mountain growl, and at any moment living ruin may leap skyhigh into the moonlight, and tumble man and his merry-making in the dust. In the eyes of very young people, and very dull old ones, there is something indescribably reckless and desperate in such a picture. It seems not credible that respectable married people, with umbrellas, should find appetite for a bit of supper within quite a long distance of a fiery moun-

tain; ordinary life begins to smell of high-handed debauch when it is carried on so close to a catastrophe; and even cheese and salad, it seems, could hardly be relished in such circumstances without something like a defiance of the Creator. It should be a place for nobody but hermits dwelling in prayer and maceration, or mere born-devils drowning care in a perpetual carouse. And yet, when one comes to think upon it calmly, the situation of these South American citizens forms only a very pale figure for the state of ordinary mankind. This world itself, travelling blindly and swiftly in overcrowded space, among a million other worlds travelling blindly and swiftly in contrary directions, may very well come by a knock that would set it into explosion like a penny squib. And what, pathologically looked at, is the human body with all its organs, but a mere bagful of petards? The least of these is as dangerous to the whole economy as the ship's powder-magazine to the ship; and with every breath we breathe, and every meal we eat, we are putting one or more of them in peril. If we clung as devotedly as some philosophers pretend we do to the abstract idea of life, or were half as frightened as they make out we are for the subversive accident that ends it all, the trumpets might sound by the hour and no one would follow them into battle—the blue-peter might fly at the truck, but who would climb into a sea-going ship? Think (if these philosophers were right) with what a preparation of spirit we should affront the daily peril of the dinner-table: a deadlier spot than any battle-field in history; where the far greater proportion of our ancestors have miserably left their bones! What woman would ever be lured into marriage, so much more dangerous than the wildest sea? And what would it be to grow old? For, after a certain distance, every step we take in life we find the ice growing thinner below our feet, and all around us and behind us we see our contemporaries going through. By the time a man gets well into the seventies, his continued existence is a mere miracle; and when he lays his old bones in bed for the night, there is an overwhelming probability that he will never see the day. Do the old men mind it, as a matter of fact? Why, no. They were never merrier; they have their grog at night, and tell the raciest stories; they hear of the death of people about their own age, or even younger, not as if it was a grisly warning, but with a simple childlike pleasure at having outlived someone else; and when a draught might puff them out like a guttering candle, or a bit of a stumble shatter them like so much glass, their old hearts keep sound and unafraid, and they go on, bubbling with laughter, through years of man's age compared to which the valley at Balaklava was as safe and peaceful as a village cricket-green on Sunday. It may fairly be questioned (if we look to the peril only) whether it was a much more daring feat for Curtius to plunge into the gulf, than for any old gentleman of ninety to doff his clothes and clamber into bed.

Indeed, it is a memorable subject for consideration, with what unconcern and gaiety mankind pricks on along the Valley of the Shadow of

Death. The whole way is one wilderness of snares, and the end of it, for those who fear the last pinch, is irrevocable ruin. And yet we go spinning through it all, like a party for the Derby. Perhaps the reader remembers one of the humorous devices of the deified Caligula : how he encouraged a vast concourse of holiday makers on to his bridge over Baïæ bay ; and when they were in the height of their enjoyment, turned loose the Prætorian guards among the company, and had them tossed into the sea. This is no bad miniature of the dealings of nature with the transitory race of man. Only, what a chequered picnic we have of it, even while it lasts ! and into what great waters, not to be crossed by any swimmer, God's pale Prætorian throws us over in the end ! We live the time that a match flickers ; we pop the cork of a ginger-beer bottle, and the earthquake swallows us on the instant. Is it not odd, is it not incongruous, is it not, in the highest sense of human speech, incredible, that we should think so highly of the ginger-beer, and trouble our heads so little about the devouring earthquake ? The love of Life and the fear of Death are two famous phrases that grow harder to understand the more we think about them. It is a well-known fact that an immense proportion of boat accidents would never happen if people held the sheet in their hands instead of tying it ; and yet, unless it be some martinet of a professional mariner or some landsman with shattered nerves, every one of God's creatures ties it. A strange instance of man's unconcern and brazen boldness in the face of death !

We confound ourselves with metaphysical phrases, which we import into daily talk with noble inappropriateness. We have no idea of what death is, apart from its circumstances and some of its consequences to others ; and although we have some experience of living, there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical guess at the meaning of the word *life*. All literature, from Job and Omar Khayam to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages ; and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes without end, philosophy has the honour of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject : that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result ! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman ; but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation ! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man ; but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word life in its dozen senses until we are weary of tricking ; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth, but one fact

remains true throughout—that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly preoccupied about its conservation ; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living. Into the views of the least careful there will enter some degree of providence ; no man's eyes are fixed entirely on the passing hour ; but although we have some anticipation of good health, good weather, wine, active employment, love, and self-approval, the sum of these anticipations does not amount to anything like a general view of life's possibilities and issues ; nor are those who cherish them most vividly, at all the most scrupulous of their personal safety. To be deeply interested in the accidents of our existence, to enjoy keenly the mixed texture of human experience, rather leads a man to disregard precautions, and risk his neck against a straw. For surely the love of living is stronger in an Alpine climber roping over a peril, or a hunter riding merrily at a stiff fence, than in a creature who lives upon a diet and walks a measured distance in the interest of his constitution.

There is a great deal of very vile nonsense talked upon both sides of the matter : tearing divines reducing life to the dimensions of a mere funeral procession, so short as to be hardly decent ; and melancholy unbelievers yearning for the tomb as if it were a world too far away. Both sides must feel a little ashamed of their performances now and again when they draw in their chairs to dinner. Indeed, a good meal and a bottle of wine is an answer to most standard works upon the question. When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation. Death may be knocking at the door, like the Commander's statue ; we have something else in hand, thank God, and let him knock. Passing bells are ringing all the world over ; all the world over, and every hour, someone is parting company with all his aches and ecstasies ; for us also the trap is laid. But we are so fond of life that we have no leisure to entertain the terror of death. 'Tis a honeymoon with us all through, and none of the longest. Small blame to us if we give our whole hearts to this glowing bride of ours, to the appetites, to honour, to the hungry curiosity of the mind, to the pleasure of the eyes in nature, and the pride of our own nimble bodies. We all of us appreciate the sensations ; but as for caring about the Permanence of the Possibility, a man's head is generally very bald, and his senses very dull, before he comes to that. Whether we regard life as a lane leading to a dead wall—a mere bag's end, as the French say—or whether we think of it as a vestibule or gymnasium, where we wait our turn and prepare our faculties for some more noble destiny ; whether we thunder in a pulpit, or pule in little atheistic poetry-books, about its vanity and brevity ; whether we look justly for years of health and vigour, or are about to mount into a bath-chair, as a step towards the hearse ; in each and all of these views and situations there is but one conclusion possible : that a man should stop his ears against paralysing terror, and run the race that is set before

him with a single mind. No one surely could have recoiled with more heartache and terror from the thought of death than our delightful lexicographer; and yet we know how little it affected his conduct, how wisely and boldly he walked, and in what a fresh and lively vein he spoke of life. Already an old man, he ventured on his Highland tour; and his heart, bound with triple brass, did not recoil before twenty-seven individual cups of tea. As courage and intelligence are the two qualities best worth a good man's cultivation, so it is the first part of intelligence to recognise our precarious estate in life, and the first part of courage to be not at all abashed before the fact. A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well armoured for this world.

And not only well armoured for himself, but a good friend and a good citizen to boot. We do not go to cowards for tender dealing; there is nothing so cruel as panic; the man who has least fear for his own carcase, has most time to consider others. That eminent chemist who took his walks abroad in tin shoes, and subsisted wholly upon tepid milk, had all his work cut out for him in considerate dealings with his own digestion. So soon as prudence has begun to grow up in the brain, like a dismal fungus, it finds its first expression in a paralysis of generous acts. The victim begins to shrink spiritually; he develops a fancy for parlours with a regulated temperature, and takes his morality on the principle of tin shoes and tepid milk. The care of one important body or soul becomes so engrossing, that all the noises of the outer world begin to come thin and faint into the parlour with the regulated temperature; and the tin shoes go equally forward over blood and rain. To be otherwise is to ossify; and the scruple-monger ends by standing stockstill. Now the man who has his heart on his sleeve, and a good whirling weathercock of a brain, who reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded, makes a very different acquaintance of the world, keeps all his pulses going true and fast, and gathers impetus as he runs, until, if he be running towards anything better than wildfire, he may shoot up and become a constellation in the end. Lord look after his health, Lord have a care of his soul, says he; and he has at the key of the position, and swashes through peril and incongruity towards his aim. Death is on all sides of him with pointed batteries, as he is on all sides of us; the nastiest chances pop out against him; mim-mouthed friends and relations hold up their hands in quite a little elegiacal synod about his path: and what cares he for all this? Being a true lover of living, a fellow with something pushing and spontaneous in his inside, he must, like any other-soldier, in any other stirring, deadly warfare, push on at his best pace until he touch the goal. "A peerage or Westminster Abbey!" cried Nelson in his bright, boyish, heroic manner. These are great incentives; not for any of these, but for the plain satisfaction of living, of being about their business in some sort or other, do

the brave, serviceable men of every nation tread down the nettle danger, and pass flyingly over all the stumbling-blocks of prudence. Think of the heroism of Johnson, think of that superb indifference to mortal limitation that set him upon his dictionary, and carried him through triumphantly until the end! Who, if he were wisely considerate of things at large, would ever embark upon any work much more considerable than a halfpenny post card? Who would project a serial novel, after Thackeray and Dickens had each fallen in mid-course? Who would find heart enough to begin to live, if he dallied with the consideration of death?

And, after all, what sorry and pitiful quibbling all this is? To forego all the issues of living in a parlour with a regulated temperature—as if that were not to die a hundred times over, and for ten years at a stretch! As if it were not to die in one's own lifetime, and without even the sad immunities of death! As if it were not to die, and yet be the patient spectators of our own pitiable change! The Permanent Possibility is preserved, but the sensations carefully held at arm's length, as if one kept a photographic plate in a dark chamber. It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in the sick-room. By all means begin your folio; even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely ending. All who have meant good work with their whole hearts, have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in mid-career, laying out vast projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced: is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination? And does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas? When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtake the man, this is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a-tiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starr'd, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land.

R. L. S.

A Romance by Rum-light.

I.

IF I were to say that we hoped to light up the whole of Paris with the blaze of that plum-pudding which we were preparing to do honour to our English guest, John Brokenshire, I should be indulging in one of those figures of speech which, poet as I am, I think should be used rather in verse than in prose. But Noémie, the children, and I had resolved that there should be enough rum round that pudding to remind our English friend in no dubious fashion of Christmas in his own insular home. Noémie had spent two days in combining the ingredients, the number and strangeness whereof made our French minds wonder; and it was good as a picture to see her stand with a wooden spoon in one hand and a list in the other, asking herself whether after all she had not forgotten something. We were both agreed that the dish which John Brokenshire and his countrymen love must have been invented by a grocer in difficulties, anxious to sell off a variegated stock, and willing, by the same occasion, to do a good turn to his friends, the grocer and the chemist.

Pudding, though, formed but one feature in our preparations, for I had ransacked the books that treat of English customs, and found that John Brokenshire would feel unwelcome unless we all kissed him under a branch of Druidical mistletoe, and encouraged him to do the same by us. So mistletoe hung from a hook in the ceiling. Then the sideboard was graced by six bottles of British ale, labelled with little red pyramids; and two of Oporto, not to be touched with a pair of tongs for the crusts and cobwebs on them, and three more of our own national vintage of Champagne, which you will allow me to think is a not unconvivial wine when capped with gold leaf, and bearing the Duke de Montebello's *carte blanche* mark to guarantee its being made of the full white grape that grows on the sunny slopes near Rheims.

Meanwhile, an odour of soup and roasting came from the little kitchen, where Noémie had just enough room to move about among her ruddy saucepans and white dishes, with her sleeves rolled up to her shapely elbows, and her cheeks pink from the glow of the stove-range. The two children, Victor and Louisette, sat each on a stool making themselves useful. Victor was scraping a truffle of pungent perfume; Louisette was cutting out one of those paper frills that are fastened to ham bones. Hard by, on the hot-plate, a goose in a baking-dish was hissing vespers plaintively in his own juice, pending the time when he should be laid on his supreme bed of apple sauce. By-the-by, looking

to the goose's ultimate destiny, may not his career on earth be described in the words of my brother poet, Horace, as *ab ovo usque ad mala*? I beg your pardon. . . .

Noémie Leblanc was not my wife, nor was I her children's uncle—only their godfather. We clubbed much together, for we all lived on the fifth floor of one of those big Parisian houses whose roofs seem to reach up to the skies whenever the weather is misty, and cast shadows right across the street when the sun shines. The lowermost story was occupied by a printing-office, where Noémie was employed as reader to two newspapers—one Republican, the other Royalist—which were struck off by the same presses and published under one roof, though their principles differed like fire and water. Her work occupied her during twelve hours of every day; and while she was punctuating the articles that were to instruct our countrymen in the principles engendered by a fruitful series of revolutions, I, sitting in my attic and writing, used to keep an eye on the children. My door remained open that they might run across the landing from their apartment to mine. What games they had! If they were not up to some piece of mischief that kept the whole upper part of the house in an uproar, they scarcely considered that they were playing. One of their favourite amusements was to filch some damp clay from a neighbouring sculptor's studio, and to make exploding pancakes. Having flattened out the clay to the size of a cheeseplate, they impressed a little hollow in the middle with the thumb, then threw the pancake with force on the floor. The sudden compression of air in the hollow caused it to explode with a noise like the eruption of a gasometer. It was a delightful sport.

Victor was seven, and Louissette six. They were good children, with affectionate ways and merry voices—he, an intelligent little urchin, much addicted to spoiling bits of wood in the carpenter's shop next door, on pretence of learning upholstery; she a damsel with gay blue eyes, already versed in the wiles of her sex for getting what she wanted, even when it might not be convenient to let her have the same. The pair went to the communal school every morning with knapsacks on their backs full of books and bread-and-butter; and if my door was not opened when they set out, they rapped at it, and called me lazy through the keyhole. At four they returned, and I rather think that was the pleasantest hour in the day to me, notwithstanding that they would herald their arrival by a terrific clatter of their small shoes on the wooden staircase, which the *concierge* was at such pains to polish twice a week with bees'-wax. From four to seven, when their mother came back, rather tired of her proof-correcting, to make supper ready, I had Victor and Louissette all to myself, or, to speak more truly, they had me all to them. Many are the poetic inspirations which they have nipped short by playing hide-and-seek behind my bed, and dragging me into their game by the coat-tails when I was immersed in that difficult task of finding rhymes—as laborious often as fishing for pearls.

I have told you that I am a poet. I write verses that are widely read and pondered over by thoughtful minds; but, unlike my countryman Victor Hugo, I attune my lyre to sing the products of man's industry rather than the works of Nature, which, maybe, have panegyrists enough. I indite versified advertisements for pushing firms, whose names cover large spaces in the outer sheets of newspapers; and I excel, so they say, in the ornate description of articles suitable for human attire, chiefly feminine. I have turned sonnets upon bonnets, but am not above rhyming to a pill or a pickle. One of the most fanciful things that ever flowed from my pen was a little epigram in four lines, which the purchaser, a hairdresser, ambitiously gave out as his own, and caused to be stuck on all the pomatum pots that left his shop. The best of this sort of work is that it keeps a man in beefsteaks, which the higher sort of epics do not, so far as my experience of them goes; but the more important point to me was that, by picking up a little more money than was essential to my needs, I was enabled to assist my neighbour Noémie Leblanc in bringing up the children, her own slender earnings being much curtailed by the sums which she sent regularly every quarter-day to her absent husband.

Where was that husband? had he deserted her? Had he gone away, as so many husbands do, with grand hopes of making a fortune, which had all come to nothing, and obliged him to fall back on his wife's wages? No, Jules Leblanc was a political exile in New Caledonia.

He had got mixed up in the doings of the Commune, and had been sentenced to transportation for life, though a milder man than he, and one less disposed to upset existing arrangements for the government of mankind, I never saw. Talk to him of charters and barricades, why he could not so much as understand what was the use of the vote which the Constitution had conferred on him, and he would have given it to the first canvasser as readily as a sou to a beggar. But Jules was a humorist; and in that droll, honest head of his Nature had implanted a gift for caricature, which served him to sketch you off a cabinet minister with a monkey's tail, or a cardinal with long ears, in no time. He called this mere fun, and thought he was only doing a laughable thing when he stopped in Paris during the civil war and brought out a comic paper, which contained twice a week a coloured cartoon of one of the generals or Royalist statesmen of the Versailles party. Fun indeed! when the generals got hold of him they showed him what fun was. He would have been shot but for Noémie's throwing herself at the feet of some man in authority, who had just influence enough to get the sentence commuted into one of transportation. We were obliged to be content with that. One weary, dry summer day Noémie travelled down to Toulon with the two children (the one a baby in arms then, the other a toddling mite not two years old) to see Jules a last time before he sailed in the convict ship. I think I can see that day now. The sun was baking hot, and the streets of Toulon were hardly fit for a dog to cross.

Jules passed along the port amidst a large gang, all handcuffed and guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets; and Noémie could do no more than wave her handkerchief to him from a distance. He answered by kissing his fettered hands once, twice, and smiling to exhort her to keep up her spirits for the children's sake. Noémie, half distracted, made another effort to get near him, but there was a crowd of other wives and mothers around her, all sobbing, and the police were obliged to force them back. So Jules disappeared, stepping on to the gangway that led to the ugly black transport, where he was to be cooped up for four months with felons and murderers, and with some convicts, maybe, as innocent as himself.

John Brokenshire, the Englishman, had come down to Toulon about a contract for supplying this very transport with tinned meat. He was standing by when Noémie swooned. Catching her in his arms he bore her to the nearest wine-shop, and when she had come to herself he swore one of those curt oaths peculiar to his shy race, vowing that it would be one of his objects in life thenceforth to procure Jules Leblanc's pardon.

John Brokenshire was a dry man, with a cold blue eye that repelled people of the begging sort. He never gushed with sentiment, as we Frenchmen do; and he seldom made promises, but when he did he kept them. He redeemed his pledge in this instance more largely than could have been expected, seeing that his words had been spoken under the influence of pity, which might have been a passing emotion.

But alas! it is not much that a commercial traveller can effect, even one so energetic as John Brokenshire. This much only could our Englishman do, and did—he kept Noémie supplied with news from her husband, and Jules with letters and remittances from Noémie. There never was such a man for knowing people. Being constantly on the move, having business connections everywhere, and not caring whether he compromised himself, since our French laws had no hold on him, John Brokenshire found it easy enough to smuggle letters in and out of the penal colony. He fancied at first it would be easy to obtain the pardon too by pulling the proper wires; but in this he was mistaken. Either the wires were rusty or he had not got hold of the right ones. Our Government does not so readily loose men at whose opinions it has taken fright. The Englishman's ill-success made him fret and abuse the political ferocity of Frenchmen with all the vigour of that liberalism which grows on the banks of the Thames; but he neither despaired nor suffered us to do so; and we knew that, wherever he went and whatever he did, he bore Jules Leblanc in mind. If he was buying wine of a Bordeaux merchant he would mention the exile's case between two tastes of samples; he begged sympathy for him of influential silk merchants, importers of British cutlery, coffee-brokers, and indigo salesmen. He had all the particulars of the poor caricaturist's offence and its mitigating circumstances by heart, and spoke of them to journalists and poli-

ticians whom he met in his travels, thereby widening every day the circle of those who knew something about poor Jules and pitied him.

That is how John Brokenshire came to be our friend. That is why, every Christmas Day since that year when Noémie had been widowed by decree of a court-martial, he was the chief guest at a banquet which we prepared of such delicacies as he loved; and seasoned with a frank French welcome. That is why we were expecting him with our goose, our mistletoe, our pudding, and our homely wishes, on the occasion of which I am now writing—which was last Christmas Day.

II.

"*Les voici!* Here they come!" exclaimed little Victor, clapping his hands as the first ascending steps of our guests were heard on the staircase; and Louissette, bravely tricked out in a Scottish tartan dress, with a Royal-Stuart sash, clung to her mother's gown, and half hid herself behind it, with one finger in her mouth—making believe to be timid, the sly puss, as if ever little French girls had really wanted for assurance!

It was six o'clock. The room was lit, the cloth laid, and Noémie stood ready to receive her visitors by the crackling fire of pear-wood logs. How pretty she looked! How sweetly sad and gentle in her black silk dress, and the small lace cap that covered her glossy chestnut hair! She was but twenty-seven then, and grief had not aged her—it had only thrown a wistful look into her blue eyes, and subdued her manner to a quietness like that of a nurse in a sick-room. For the sake of her children, who could not remember their father, she had been obliged to maintain an outward serenity more heroic than sorrow; and had forced herself always to smile in their presence, that their young hearts might not be moulded to a melancholy which would change to moroseness when they grew older. Only those who knew Noémie as I did guessed how her wifely heart ached with hope long deferred. How she could work so exactly as she did at her correction of proofs—never missing a stray comma, nor an ill-placed circumflex, and amending even grammatical errors in the neatest of hands—was to me a mystery. Grattelot, the foreman of the printer's works, and Barbelard, the sub-editor of one of the two Republican journals on which Noémie was employed, were as much puzzled as I; but they had ended by concluding that Madame Leblanc was of a philosophical turn, a master-woman, who thought that crying spoilt the eyes. They and their wives were to be our guests on this evening. By the hearty way in which they entered, sniffing our goose and glancing at our bottles, it was evident that they did not consider they were intruding into an abode of sorrow.

Grattelot, Barbelard, their spouses, and John Brokenshire, formed the total of our expected company—that is, including Noémie, the children, and self, nine of us, the number of the Muses, were to sit down to table. Neither Grattelot, Barbelard, nor their wives, reminded one of the Muses though. The printer's foreman was a little swarthy fellow

who had a Rabelaisian leer, and spoke with the richest brogue of Marseilles. He used z's for j's, and pronounced *o* as *ou*. Out of his experience in the print-shop he had picked up an odd jumble of education and a standing grievance against all literary men, whom he accused of never measuring their productions to the requirements of newspaper size. He cared nothing for style or logic: "Give me adaptability," he would say; and his universal test of merit was: "Will this article run to more or less than a column and a quarter?" If it ran to more the writer was stamped in his mind as a man of incontinent verbiage; if to less he was one who lacked elasticity of expression. Grattelot had a respect for poets, because their lines were easy to set up in type, and did capitally as padding; and of course he gave the palm of poetry to bards who did not write in Alexandrines. He has often told me that he preferred an ode of mine to the finest idyll by M. François Coppée; and I felt much flattered by the compliment till I discovered it was owing solely to my fondness for six-foot versification, not to the subject-matter of my odes, which Grattelot never read.

Barbelard, the sub-editor, was another literary curiosity, for he could only read with difficulty, and spelt no word in our language correctly save his own name. He had been appointed sub-editor by reason of his gigantic stature and his prowess with all duelling weapons. An old sergeant of the Cent Gardes, who had been decorated for carrying off two Austrian colonels prisoners (one under each arm) in the Italian war, he stood six French feet in his socks, and had a pair of bristling red moustaches, which when he was angry looked as if they were aflame. It was Barbelard who assumed the responsibility of all the unsigned articles in the Republican journal which employed him; and if any stranger came to ask for explanations about personalities, this imposing sub-editor was there to answer him in the correctest language of chivalry. He tendered no apologies or explanations, but would forthwith be ready to accept a challenge to fight next morning, early, with swords or pistols, according as might be most convenient. This often led to little dialogues, somewhat in the following fashion:—

STRANGER (*bouncing in furiously with the offending journal in his hand*).—Sir, I want to see the man who wrote this article.

BARBELARD (*rising with dignity from the sub-editorial seat, with a pipe in his mouth*).—Young man, it's me as wrote that article. If you want to objectionise, name your friends, and we'll have it out at day-break.

STRANGER (*growing civil*).—Ah no. . . . I have merely come to renew my subscription to the paper. . . . What a warm day it is. . . . Goo-o-d morning. . . . (*and exit*).

Sometimes, however, a duel would arise, and then Barbelard always showed himself magnanimous in inflicting only flesh-wounds—just mere flea-bites, as he called them, ripping up the arm for twelve inches or so, or carrying off an insignificant little piece from the aggressor's calf.

Barbelard had fought a round dozen of duels ; but he owed another duty to his newspaper besides fighting, for he appeared in the correctional courts to answer all charges of attacking the Government, and underwent the sentences of imprisonment to which members of the staff were condemned. He had come to look upon the gaol of Ste. Pélagie much as a second home, and was never sorry to go there for a few months, for he got double pay, unlimited allowance of tobacco, and excellent meals, sent in daily from the restaurant at the expense of his employers so long as his incarceration lasted. Madame Barbelard, a little black-haired woman with despotie eyes, used affectionately to remark that she was always more pleased to see her husband in prison than out of it, for she knew then that he was not in mischief—risking his life in mortal combat, or drinking more absinthe than was good for him at the café. Prison life was such a saving, too, for she could go every day to sit with Barbelard from ten to six, take her meals with him, and economise thereby the cost of marketing and kitchen fuel. She had no opinion of Liberal governments, ascribing their unwillingness in sending journalists to prison to sordid stinginess with the public purse.

It turned out that on this Christmas Day when he came to dine with us, honest Barbelard had one of his periodical scores of durance to wipe off, for his first remark to us, when he had shaken hands with Noémie and kissed the children, was about going to Ste. Pélagie on the morrow. "Three months for writing disrespectfully of the Senate," he said in his dry bass voice, and casting a sidelong glance of anticipation at the *chiffonnière* where the bottles stood.

"Yes, three whole months!" exclaimed little Madame Barbelard in glee. "I had some hopes it might have been six, for then we could have saved up enough to buy that pretty villa at Suresnes, on which I have set my heart."

"We'll make up for it by taking three more months in the summer, if all goes well, my dear," said Barbelard, good-humouredly ; "too much off the reel isn't good : one likes to get out and breathe the air now and then."

"Ah, that's just it ; and then hatfuls of francs are spent in billiards and little glasses with your friends!" responded Madame Barbelard, tartly. "Think of what nice things we might do if you remained for a whole twelvemonth under lock and key!"

"I wonder why they never send printers' foremen to prison," said Madame Grattelot, querulously. She was an Alsatian dame, very fleshy and frugal, and talked with that grinding Strasburg accent, which used to make us Frenchmen laugh till all the sturdy men and women of our fairest Rhenish province passed under the Prussian yoke. "*Lieber Himmel!*" continued she, "what would I not give to see Sesostris in prison for a year, that we might save a little money in these not-to-be-equalled-for-hardness times!"

Sesostris was Grattelot, and he laughed : "Softly Mamma Gredel—

if I were sent to prison thou wouldest save nothing, for I should have to go there at my own cost. The good times when printers were imprisoned went away with the Empire."

"I wish the Empire would come back then," declared Madame Grattelot. "There should be equal privileges for all: if a sub-editor goes to prison, a printer should be allowed to go too."

At this Madame Barbelard fired up, for she was a stickler about her husband's prerogatives.

"But you forget, Madame, a sub-editor runs greater risks, for he has to draw the sword at times!" she observed with a touch of asperity.

"Doubtless, Madame, but Sesostrius would fight too if need were," retorted the Alsatian dame, drily; "and all I say is that it's hard that all the enjoyment should go to one set of parties, when there's room enough in those prisons for other parties if the Government only chose to make better laws."

Noémie diverted the course of this delicate dispute. It was in her nature to play the peacemaker. I have seen her in the old times, before her husband went away, reconcile a roomful of artists, who were quarrelling about æsthetic art, by setting a jug of beer in their midst. She did something of the sort now by bringing out a decanter of kirsch and some liqueur glasses to whet our appetites. Such potations make tongues soft. We were still expecting John Brokenshire. The children had climbed on to Barbelard's huge knee, something like a camel's lump in size, and were riding a cock-horse on it. The two lady guests, possibly struck of a sudden by the incongruity of vaunting the delights of imprisonment in the hearing of Noémie, who was pining after her captive husband, fell to conversing with their hostess on the more congenial topic of children's garments. Grattelot, pleasantly inhaling the odours of good things that came from the kitchen, took his stand by the mantel-shelf, and talked to me about my natty and "handy" verses. He was delighted with a recent sonnet of mine on a newly invented bootjack.

The half after six struck from the steeple of a neighbouring church. It was at that hour that John Brokenshire was due; and he never came late, for he regulated every movement of his by a powerful chronometer that told the days of the week and month, and even the changes of the moon. The children pricked up their ears. "L'Ami Brokenshire" was to them the very incarnation of Father Christmas, for he never failed to come with parcels of toys under his arms, and bags of sugar-plums in his pocket. Was he going to be late this year, just for once? No, here he came. Those were his well-known strides on the staircase, clearing four steps at a time, like a giraffe racing uphill. One step more and he would be here.

"Le voici!" cried little Victor and his sister, jumping off Barbelard's knee with a loud crowing, and off they rushed into the passage. Another minute, and John Brokenshire, parcels, wraps, comforter and all, was

standing under the mistletoe to be hugged and kissed. We all kissed him, men and women, as the fashion is in our country; and I promise you Noémie Leblanc's salute was not the least hearty, though she did make a little sisterly blushing about it.

III.

Imagine the lankiest of men, with cheek-bones the hue of red currant jelly, a hay-coloured beard flowing over his waistcoat, a grey tweed suit dived about with deep pockets fore and aft, and there you have John Brokenshire as he appeared every day in the year; add a little fog that hung about his flaxen hair, and the blueish end of his nose, and a broad smile that displayed his long yellow teeth, like a whole game at dominoes coloured by long use, and you will have him as he showed himself on this particular occasion of Christmas festivity in our hospitable Parisian lodging.

Christmas was his one day of rest in the year, if rest it can be called to breakfast with an uncle in the suburbs at eight, to attend Divine service in the British Church at eleven, after that to lunch with a married sister, and to wind up with three hours' racing among toy-shops to bargain for the best sort of gifts for a legion of juvenile friends at retail price. But this was rest to John Brokenshire, comparatively speaking, for mostly he was in a hurry to catch express trains. Christmas was the one day on which he did no travelling but that which was done for his own pleasure, and the maintenance of affectionate relations with his kinsfolks and acquaintances. When he came to dine on the 25th of December with Noémie Leblanc, we might be sure that he would have the whole evening to himself, and not bolt away between the roast and sweets, as he was certain to do if invited on any other day of any other month in the year.

"Mong Dew, mes Amis, quel plaisir d'être un peu tronqué!" exclaimed this worthy man, drawing a fifteen-bladed knife from one of his score of pockets, and beginning to cut the strings of his various parcels. "Only to think! pas de voyage until four fifteen to-morrow morning, when I'm off for Lyons! Monsieur Barbelard, you seem to me fresh and hale; I've brought you a pair of furred slippers to wear in prison."

"Thank you, Monsieur John," laughed the tall sub-editor. "You seem gay enough too; your business is prosperous, I hope?"

"Business is so-so," said John Brokenshire. "There are times, in this country of yours, when money can be hauled in with a net, and others when it has to be angled for, coin by coin, with a fish-hook. It depends on politics, which are shifty things everywhere."

"Politics come of newspapers," remarked Grattelot; "if people would read more books and fewer journals, it would be better for trade."

"Not for *my* trade," said Barbelard, finishing his kirsch. "Here's to the spread of journalism!"

"Oh you—you'd like to be setting people by the ears all the year round; but they'll lock you up for longer than you like one of these days," ejaculated the fleshy Madame Grattelot.

"No, Madame, they won't lock him up for longer than he likes; he'll retire from the business if he sees any signs of that," retorted Madame Barbelard.

They were at it again, but John Brokenshire checked them: "Hullo, you were wrangling over that question last year, and the year before," said he; "I shall be thinking myself at Versailles, among the Deputies, if you don't mind. But I tell you what, I am hungry, and the sooner we sit down the better."

"There's that goose in the kitchen squealing to be dished, my dear Noémie," remarked Grattelot, with an enjoyable whiff.

"Ah yes; and, Noémie, mon onfang—don't serve up the pudding in a soup-tureen, as you did a year or two ago," prayed John Brokenshire with a wink.

Noémie laughed at this reminder of a bygone failure in preparing the national English dish. She retired to lend a helping hand to the servant-maid who had been hired for the evening from the *Rôtisseur's* over the way; and meanwhile our commercial friend laid out all the presents he had brought. No one had been forgotten. No one—for the Grattelots and Barbelards were old cronies of Brokenshire's—and it was not in his nature to perpetrate slips of memory. The sub-editor got his furred slippers; the printer's foreman a meerschaum pipe with a pound of Latakiah, bought while selling a stock of old rifles to the Turks in Asia Minor; Madame Barbelard had a Norwich shawl that looked like Cashmere, and Madame Grattelot had a piece of Lyons silk that looked like what it was—first-rate stuff, and no cheating about the dye. Then came the turn of the children to be helped out of one of those wondrous toy boxes which our Parisian toy-shops send out to develop the instincts of luxury in the minds of French infancy. Victor was presented with a set of articulated soldiers, who made a mimic war in defending a cardboard fort; and little Louisette was rendered happy with a silk-clad doll that could shut its eyes, and say "Mamma," like a very small child with a stomach-ache. I wish I could add the names of a number of gaudy children's books, illustrated by my sprightly friends MM. Bertall and Grévin; but I had scarcely time to examine these treasures then, for John Brokenshire thrust something into my own hands—a Russian leather purse, and a pretty full one too. As he did so, he told me that he had been successful in disposing of a whole sheaf of my verses.

This was grateful news that made me redden.

"And I've orders for a lot more, friend Poet," said he, closing that fearful knife of his with a snap. "A publican at Nice wants you to recom-

mend his fried fish, and a pastry-cook at Arles has a notion that you can make his cream tarts popular."

"Stick to the six-foot verses, Poet—there's nothing like them for printers," observed Grattelot, who was sucking at the amber mouth-piece of his pipe.

"And then there's a fellow at Carcassonne going to set up some cheap baths," continued Brokenshire, consulting a list. "As this is the first time the people in those parts have seen a bath-house, they may poke fun at the innovation unless the inventor can put the laughers on his side by something smart in the way of an epigram, which he will print on his prospectuses."

"I'll do my best," said I, thinking of a rhyme for soap and water.

"But stop a bit; this isn't all," said John Brokenshire, in that smileless way he had when giving a serious order that he meant to be executed with care and despatch. "I must bespeak some of your best quality verses for a tailor. This is an extra-important case. Do you think you could say something nice and kind about breeches and waistcoats?"

"I happen to have a copy of tailoring verses ready made, and only waiting to be filled up with the purchaser's name," answered I, foraging in my pocket-book.

"Good, then. But are they of your best brew?"

"As good as I can write, I think; but I'll try better, if needful."

"All right then," said the Englishman; "but stay—we'll hear your verses by-and-by; now's the time for dinner—and here's Noémie's present."

Saying this, he laid a small square parcel by the side of Noémie's plate. She had just entered, preceding the servant wench who bore the soup-tureen; but when she would have stretched forth her hand, smiling, to look at the present, Brokenshire restrained her. "No, my dear, not now. When the plum pudding comes on, and there's a flash of blue light to cheer us."

His will was law on these occasions. If he had told us all to kneel of a row and guess conundrums, we would have done it. Noémie said nothing, but began ladling out the smoking soup with tranquil acquiescence; and we all sat down, the Englishman laying his napkin over his knees, while we three Frenchmen tucked ours under our chins, Frenchwise.

I noticed that John Brokenshire had made no remark yet about Noémie's husband, and she had done no more than question him with a silent interrogation of her blue eyes. She knew his ways, and that there was nothing to be got out of him by pressing. If he had anything to say he would divulge it all in due time. For the present he was absorbed in his soup, and we in ours. It was the richest beef-broth flavoured with leeks, and the spoons seemed to dip into it lovingly of their own accord. Only the children had no appetites, being too much excited

about their presents, and grudging every moment that delayed them from going back to play with these tokens of John Brokenshire's friendship.

So this dinner of ours proceeded. And ah! my friends, how I wish I had the pen of those eminent gastronomists, MM. Erckmann-Chatrian, to describe to you what effect that succulent array of dishes had on our jovial minds. None other but the chroniclers of so many brawny feasts in the hard-eating country round Phalsburg could do justice to the splendid figure which the roast goose cut in his dish, stuffed as he was with chestnuts and truffles, and glistening with the sheenest gravy. A ring of well-browned sausages surrounded him. His flesh was so plump that the knife sliced deep into it, and the mouthfuls which you ate with the apple-sauce seemed to melt on the tongue. Nor must it be forgotten that we had drink enough to defy indigestion. The yellow ale of England sparkled in our glasses with its white wig of froth, and our own red vin de Grave, so petulant and mirth-compelling, twinkled like molten rubies. Grattelot and Barbelard drank a bottle apiece, and then polished off a third between them. Their wives gnawed the drumsticks, which they held in their fingers like persons who are not ashamed to show they are enjoying themselves; and buxom Madame Grattelot said that all this reminded her of Alsace. John Brokenshire stuck to his beer and made havoc among the sausages. At last we had enough of it, not that we were tired in mind, but because physical Nature said "hold!" Noémie helped to clear away the plates, and the servant wench went out to fetch the pudding.

It was then that I uncorked the champagne bottles and filled the glasses for a toast to our hostess. We always began with that, and followed it with one to John Brokenshire, in those long glasses of the old fashion that show off the bubbles better than the modern top-heavy bowls. At this moment the maid marched in with the pudding, which she held at arms' length, laughing and shutting her eyes. She had set fire to it in the kitchen, and the flames, leaping up in forked tongues of blue, red, and yellow, licked the sprig of holly on the top and made it crackle. The children clapped their hands, and Barbelard, exhilarated by what he had drunk, shouted "*Vive l'Angleterre!*" There never was such a joyous evening.

John Brokenshire, however, held up a finger to enjoin silence.

"May I open my parcel now?" asked Noémie, timidly, but with a woman's curiosity about all things hidden.

"Not yet, my dear—one moment," said John Brokenshire; and he looked across the table to me. "Poet, what did you say about having some verses suitable to a tailor? Mind you, it's a tailor whom I wish to please and honour."

"I have the verses here," said I. "I keep a stock of them ready, in case of getting sudden orders."

"A good plan," said our commercial friend.

"Sometimes inspiration doesn't come when wanted," I explained, smoothing out my verses on the tablecloth. "You may be asked to rhyme to 'blacking' when your thoughts are running on 'eau-de-Cologne.' What is your tailor's name?"

"Jaker, an Englishman; but he lives in France. Fill up that name in your blanks if it will scan. If not, contrive to make it scan."

"It will scan," said I, drawing out a pencil.

"Well then, read on," begged John Brokenshire. "This is no common matter, and we'll all listen."

I was struck by John Brokenshire's tone—one of greater gravity than the circumstances seemed to call for. Reading aloud is not my *forte*, and I would have gladly passed on my verses to Noémie, who had a sweet musical voice, well suited to bring out the beauties of poetry. But she was labouring under the emotion of women when they suspect some mystery, and was not in the mood for anything in the nature of a public performance. So I did the reading myself in my best company sing-song; and here is the poem I read. I need hardly tell you it was French, but John Brokenshire has since translated it for me into his own tongue and given it a title. I dedicate it with affection and respect to the noble-hearted clothier whose wares it celebrates.

A PAYMENT IN RHYME.

On a summer's morning early, when the grass with dew was pearly,
I called upon a farmer who was feeding little chicks;
He ceased not from his labour, but he said, "Good morning, neighbour;
My brecks are worth a guinea, and they cost me twelve and six."

And the morning sun rose higher, and there came a forage buyer,
And he asked the stalwart farmer for the prices of his ricks:
It was "New hay, four eleven; and the last year's ninety seven;"
And his brecks were worth a guinea, but had cost him twelve and six.

Then a builder, as appointed, came to speak of fences jointed,
And an apple-loft of timber, and a cattle-shed of bricks;
When the notes were duly posted, then again the farmer boasted
That his brecks were worth a guinea, and had cost him twelve and six.

When the clouds at noon grew thinner, then we took a frugal dinner,
And the farmer's buxom daughter did a glass of toddy mix;
And her father, waxing wordy, said his legs were strong and sturdy,
And his brecks were worth a guinea, but had cost him twelve and six.

To the fish-pond then we sauntered, where I often had the vaunt heard,
"When wheat's in bloom the tench will rise, although you bait with sticks."
And he caught some goodly dishes of the little silver fishes;
And his brecks were worth a guinea, but had cost him twelve and six.

When the sun had finished setting, and the spouse our tea was getting,
He took a pair of candles and put matches to their wicks:
And the swallows on the skylight were remarking in the twilight,
That his brecks were worth a guinea, and had cost him twelve and six.

And I lit a cigarito, for no fair one puts a veto
 On the act, since my affections on myself alone I fix;
 And as home I slowly wandered, I enviously pondered,
 Would my breeks were worth a guinea, and had cost but twelve and six.

In my sleep a vision hailed me, and at first my courage failed me;
 But he smiled, and then I knew it was no courier of Old Nick's:
 "I'm the ghost of William Jaker, England's famous breeches-maker,
 And my wares are worth a guinea, but shall cost you twelve and six."

I finished reading, and gazed at my plate as authors do when they have been airing their talents in the family circle, and know that the applause will exceed their dues.

"Bravo!" cried the whole table, children included; and there was a chorus of compliments from all save Grattelot, who deplored that I had abandoned the safe path of six-foot lyrics.

"If you write such long verses as those, you might just as well be doing prose," said he sententiously.

"Hush!" exclaimed John Brokenshire. "Hand over the paper to me, Poet. You'll be glad to give it gratis (though it will be paid for, don't fear *) when you learn that William Jaker is a man who makes breeches for the President of the Republic's favourite valet."

"Ah!" ejaculated Madame Grattelot, admiringly.

"An old soldier—I knew him," chimed in Barbelard. "He was one of those who stormed the Malakoff Tower; but he wears black breeches and a white choker now, like a notary."

"And he shaves his master every morning," said John Brokenshire.

I bowed my acknowledgments, but looked puzzled. Noémie, quicker as women are, detected some meaning in the phrase, and changed colour.

"Consequently William Jaker has influence, you see," continued John Brokenshire, shaking the pudding-dish to make the flames go on leaping. "You know servants have often more power than cabinet ministers. So when I got talking to William Jaker about poor Jules Leblanc's case, I knew that if he repeated the thing to the Marshal, he would be throwing seed on good ground."

"And did he repeat it?" asked Noémie, breathless.

"Yes, my dear, he did," said John Brokenshire. "He repeated it while he was plying his lather, and while the Marshal had a napkin round his neck so that he couldn't budge."

"*Ach lieber Himmel!*—the brave man. And did anything come of it?" asked Madame Grattelot.

"Well, Noémie may open her parcel now," answered the Englishman.

"What's in it?" we all asked, excited, as Noémie, with trembling fingers, unloosed the string.

"It contains your husband's pardon," my dear, said John Brokenshire. "And now to the pudding!"

* It was paid for in kind—superfine and a perfect fit.

North-Country Students.

ANY Caledonian who knows his own country, and has visited the university towns in "La Bretagne Bretonnante," must have been struck by many features they have in common with the seats of learning in north-eastern Scotland. Vannes, Quimper, and Tréguier, in their scenery as well as their social aspect, remind you at every turn of Old Aberdeen and St. Andrews. The weather-beaten buildings and the vegetation show the signs of a blustering, ungenial climate, and an unkindly though not unfruitful soil. The people have had to work all the harder; and in Brittany, where they are behindhand in arts and agriculture, they continue poor, if not poverty-stricken, in spite of their labour and their thrift. You see little of the state and luxury of learning that delight the æsthetic connoisseur in the great English Universities. You do not come at each turn of the crooked streets upon marvels of ornate architecture, mediæval or modern. You do not look down long vistas of time-coloured stone, broken into a picturesque variety of outline by great bay-windows and flying buttresses, by quaint finials and jutting gables. You do not pass under the sombre recesses of vaulted archways to lose yourself in labyrinths of cloistered shades and sequestered quadrangles with their trim grass-plots and murmuring fountains; and there is little embellishment in the way of umbrageous academical groves, overhanging secluded walks by calm reaches of river. Yet the evidences of the enlightened liberality of the past are conspicuous enough, considering the circumstances. Besides the invariable picturesqueness of the domestic architecture; besides the accustomed profusion of sculptured crosses and images of the Virgin in her shrines, there are ecclesiastical and educational buildings that charm the artist and grow upon him. There is something that is at once impressive and in harmony with the climate and the landscape, in the massive designs of colleges and churches, in the grey granite and the green Kersecurton that have been wrought out in bold relief with equal skill and patience. Erected and endowed with comparative munificence, at the cost of no small sacrifice, they have resisted through centuries the ravages of storms and of those civil disturbances that have left ineffaceable marks upon them.

And it is a similar spirit of intelligent self-denial that has filled the classes and lecture-rooms with hard-working and penurious students. For a poetical, yet vividly realistic description of the *klomek*, you may turn to the pages of Emile Souvestre, himself a Breton born and bred. He will tell you how peasant families, with whom frugality is a second

nature, have made it their pride to spare a part of their hard-earned savings, that one of their most promising members may be brought up to the office of the priesthood; how the lad, as rough in dress and in manners as one of the colts they turn to pasture on their barren heaths, is sent up from the paternal cottage to the college with but a few five-franc pieces in his pocket; how he is bound over by hard necessity to the practice of the most rigid economy. In the flush of his health and youth, he must deny himself all but the cheap pleasures that come of the true enjoyment of familiar nature, and these he appreciates in a sombre spirit that grows more melancholy as his cares accumulate. He has to stint himself on the simplest fare; he lives on rye bread or buck-wheat cakes, with an occasional morsel of bacon, and it is lucky for him if his sedentary life blunts the edge of his healthy appetite. Frequently he is fed very much from hand to mouth, when his mother brings him the weekly basket on her visits to the university town upon a market day. He shifts for his sleeping quarters as he can—sometimes sharing a garret with half a dozen comrades of his class; sometimes being thankful to make his bed among the trusses of hay in the loft over a stable. He is driven to all manner of ingenious devices to obtain the indispensable books and writing materials; and he does his best to eke out his miserable means by giving lessons in his leisure to the families of the townsfolk, or keeping the books of some small shopkeeper. Even what may be called the aristocracy of these Breton colleges are only better off in degree. The provincial seigneurs of the *hobereaux*, half-noble, half farmer, who have lived from father to son in their manorial *châteaux*, hunting the wolf and the boar by way of recreation, have little money to throw away on the cadets of the decaying house. Things may have been changing somewhat for the better since the days of which Souvestre wrote; but then Brittany is still among the most primitive of the French provinces, and few have benefited less by the general advance in prosperity.

Agriculture and commerce are much further advanced in the northern Scotch counties. But allowing for that, their universities have still much in common with those of the Breton towns, and they had yet more in common in the past. The Scotch colleges have flourished in consequence of the system of strict economy which made it possible for so many poor students to avail themselves of the advantages it offered. The students, when they enrol themselves, may be roughly divided into a couple of classes—those who are mere boys, and the middle-aged men. With the Scotch farmer and the well-to-do country tradesman, as with the Breton, it has been partly an ambition, and partly a matter of principle, to give at least one of the sons a good college education, and send him, if possible, into the Church. There is many a worthy old woman, who, like the mother of Dominie Sampson, would go down to the grave in peace and pride, could she but see her son 'wag his head in a pulpit.' But of course, next to that praiseworthy aspiration, money and time are

paramount considerations; so the boy's education must be forced that he may "fend" for himself as soon as possible. He is pretty sure to have been fairly well grounded at his parish school, and so soon as he may have even an off-chance in the bursary competition, he is sent up to the college to try his luck. Should he come better off in the venture than was expected, he is duly entered on the university books, possibly at the ripe age of from fourteen to sixteen. Should he fail the one year he tries again the next, but probably the second time in very sober earnest. Or it may have been a question whether it would not be cheaper in the end to let him enter upon the curriculum forthwith, without help from the endowments. Thus by far the greater number of the students are extremely young, and these younger students, when they go without exhibitions, pecuniarily look to their families for support. But there is always a small minority who are entirely self-made, and who can only hope to attain their ambition by persevering with most admirable determination and self-denial. It is at least noteworthy, if not extraordinary, that many of those grave seniors are slow and sure far more than brilliant. They are longing to raise themselves to a higher rank in life, and as they have set their hearts on becoming lights in the ministry, so they have fallen in love with learning for its own sake. They have long devoted each stray half-hour in the intervals of severe bodily labour to steady plodding study; or they may have laid themselves out to take the *élan* for a fresh start, when they had already apparently settled down for life in such a comparatively humble post as that of a parish school-master. And if they have lost, or never experienced, the first flush of intellectual freshness and animation, they have at least this in their favour when at last they arrive at the university, that their robust constitutions have toughened into maturity, making them capable of almost unremitting exertion.

In northern Scotland, as in Brittany, there are, of course, exceptions to the general rule. Not to speak of the rich cities like Edinburgh or Glasgow, or even of the Marischal College in the flourishing new town of Aberdeen, there are always some comfortable citizens or lairds who choose to educate their sons at Old Aberdeen or St. Andrews. These more fortunate young gentlemen might work or idle as they pleased; or thought they ought, so far as their prospects of bread and butter were concerned; but at all events they ran comparatively little risk of being tempted to kick over the traces by force of vicious example. For the most part the life at college was characterised by an earnestness and conscientiousness that were the more remarkable, considering the unripe age of the students. The boy was not so much the father of the man as prematurely the man himself. That used to be especially the case in Old Aberdeen, before the more venerable King's College was fused by an Act of Parliament with its younger competitor in the new town. Dr. George MacDonald, who, as we fancy, must have been educated there, has described it most graphically in some of his works. Thither every

autumn came troops of Highland and Lowland lads, unkempt and seemingly uncared for, in their hobnailed boots and clothes of the roughest material and queerest cut, to scramble for a footing on the slippery stepping-stones to success that were offered in the shape of modest bursaries. The highest prize to be gained was 30% per annum. Some thirty came and remained. Many of the rest, after much family deliberation, concluded, as the Americans say, to stay on without winning. There might be a hundred entries, more or less. But, win or lose, there were not many of the candidates who had not to look most closely to the main chance. So a good place in the coming competition meant everything for some of them, and much for all. On an income of from 30% to 20% they could live in almost luxurious ease, through the short session of five months. Even the most insignificant of the prizes might make all the difference between privation and comparative comfort. The fees for the lectures were moderate enough. There was no such thing as a system of private tutorships—lodgings were ridiculously cheap, and the living as frugal as could well be conceived.

On the morning of the eventful day that had been anxiously looked forward to for so long, the crowd that gathered in the college quadrangle was a curious and characteristic study, though it might have been hard to say whether the sight was more pathetic or ludicrous. You might have been reminded of a mixed drove of Highland cattle, picked up singly or in lots at the "Falkirk Tryste" in the Old Aberdeen market, and there herded promiscuously together. Some were savage of aspect, or rather what the French call *farouche*, and all were more or less shy and embarrassed. There was no mistaking the hearty recognition of old acquaintances, only too glad to "foregather" in such a mob and in such serious and unfamiliar circumstances. And strangers made awkward advances towards acquaintance, while some who were more unsocial or more morbidly self-conscious, would hold themselves austere apart, looking miserably out of their element. The common and absorbing interest in the crowd tended at the same time to repel them. Each of the faces bore more or less unmistakably the traces of an overpowering anxiety; and no one could tell whether, in the stranger who accosted him, he might not have come across a formidable rival. Constitutional reserve struggled with kindly feeling, and the result was a bearing that was removed far asunder as the poles from the easy demeanour of the light-hearted young Englishman who has been knocking about since his childhood at public schools. Faces that should have been fresh seemed anxious and careworn, and ruddy cheeks were "sicklied" to a mottled hue by the pale tinge of constrained anxiety. Examinations in ordinary, whatever may be at stake, are taken comparatively easily by the competitors. Carefully educated and well cared for as a matter of course, they have hardly learned to realise their personal interest in them, for though they may be mortified and disappointed if they fail, yet their future, after all, is the affair of their

parents. But the most juvenile at these examinations for bursaries felt overpoweringly how much was depending on the day. Ignominious defeat might dishearten their backers, and be taken to mean that they would never repay the time, the trouble, and the money bestowed upon them. They might be sent back in disgust to the counter or the plough, and see their literary birthright pass to a younger brother. In any case, instead of being invested with the dignity of manhood, they would be "remitted to curjandum," in Scotch law phraseology—condemned to school and another year of writing, while their prospects of distinction would have gone down fifty per cent. in the estimation of their neighbours and the parish schoolmaster. As for the elder men, in reality they were more deeply moved, though they might show rare self-control. If they had some cause to believe in themselves, they had at least a good reason for diffidence. Frequently they had never had the opportunity of testing themselves in preliminary trials. In many instances they had had none of the regular education that brings one visibly up to a certain mark; they had been buoying themselves on doubtful hopes, and might be on the brink of a painful disillusioning.

So there was rushing to and fro on the gravel of the quadrangle, and a clatter of voices and heavy boots under the old arcade of stone that formed the basement on one side of the building. Very picturesque the buildings were, by the way, though something of a jumble architecturally. But all that was not in good taste was serviceable and perfectly inoffensive. On the opposite side to the low-hewed piazza was the venerable fabric of the chapel, with its windows withdrawn into deep recesses between the main or flying buttresses; and the edifice was capped by the symbolical crown, a conspicuous landmark from the neighbouring bay, springing airily from the battlements of the quadrangular tower on circling ribs of rugged granite. In these stirring circumstances, however, the feverish crowd had small thought to spare for architectural graces, even supposing their tastes had lain in that direction. But the most aggravating waiting-time must come to an end, and the clock, with an ominous gasp by way of warning, chimes out the hour of fate. The doors of the great hall are thrown open by the "sacristan" on duty in his silver-laced robe, and there is such a scramble and rush as you may see up the stairs to the gallery of a Surrey theatre on Boxing Night. But when the crowd has once shot the narrows of the entrance, and surged out into the space beyond, it is sobered and steadied by the sight awaiting it. To say nothing of the dignified professors on duty, everything recalls them to the solemnity of the occasion. For everything means grim business; and there lie the blotting pads, arranged mathematically at intervals on the long desks of ink-stained deal that have been hacked and embellished by the knives of generations who have long since made their way in the world, to drop off and be gathered to their fathers.

The weapons of the competitors were fixed by *senatus-consultum*, and

each of them carried under his arm his Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary. Fortunately their nerves were pretty firmly strung, but we should hope that in after-life they knew few more agitating moments than that when the lithographed trial-paper was put into their tremulous hands. Probably at first sight it did not seem formidable. It contained simply a piece of English prose to turn into Latin, and some pieces of Latin to translate into English. The former was made the real touchstone of merit; and those who had best reason to pique themselves on their powers of composition best knew what difficulties might be bristling in their paths, and how many slips might interpose between the cup and the lip. For there was not a boy in the hall who had not been kept labouring at "versions" since he had gone beyond the elements of his Ruddiman's Latin Grammar. All had been modelling themselves indefatigably on the masterpieces of the Augustan age, although some might come short of their more delicate graces. They might have hazy ideas of English, or even of grammatical Scotch, but not a lad of them could hope for prize or place if he took any serious liberties with grammatical Latin. So, having arranged the raw material of the exercise, they next proceeded to the polishing; and painfully confusing that task often proved. How many a luckless wight who had best have relied on his original inspirations, found himself losing his head altogether, and confounding confusion in his struggles to recover it. When he should have been delicately weighing words and the subtle shades and requirements of idioms, his blurred and blotted manuscript was a reflection of the chaos in his brain; and when the announcement came that time was up, he withdrew in paroxysms of anguish and despondency.

Prisoners arraigned on a capital charge must have a trying time of it while waiting the deliberations of a painstaking jury, though their agony may be measured by hours, and not very many of these; but it would be saddening to speculate on the various frames of mind in which the slow days of suspense and idleness went by, between the competition and the announcement of its results. The announcement, when the hushed audience hung on the lips of the dignitary, changed into the utterance of the words of doom. In spite of his position and his presumed treasures of erudition, the principal, or the elderly professor who represented him, might have seemed to unprejudiced eyes a sufficiently commonplace individual. His bodily presence might be mean, and his speech hesitating and contemptible. He fumbled with his snuff-box, he adjusted his spectacles; he hummed and hawed, he crumpled a memorandum in his fingers—as if he were not trifling with feelings already unstrung to the uttermost. But at last he speaks, though with an uncertain sound. "Alexander," he draws out slowly, and straightway a score or so of Alexanders of all sizes and ages prick their ears incontinently in eager excitement. "Macdonald," he proceeds, and half a dozen Alexander Macdonalds feel their hearts going off suddenly at a hand-gallop. A pretty flutter these excited young gentlemen

are in until their minds are set at rest, one way or another, by subsequent inquiry and comparison. So the list was gone through with more than befitting deliberation. Some five-and-twenty of the hearers were made more or less happy, while the rest dispersed in dejection, and some of them most profoundly miserable in the firm conviction that life was over for them, just as they had hoped it was beginning in earnest.

Winners or losers, a hundred or more of these accomplished young Latinists stood committed to their college career. Probably most had already been provident enough to secure apartments for the session. As to that, there was no sort of difficulty, although no arrangements could be made for a shorter period, seeing that three-quarters of the residents in the "College Bounds" and the steep "Spital" eked out their livelihood by letting lodgings. It was a very modest harvest they hoped to reap. If we used the word "apartments," it was in the meaning of Mr. Richard Swiveller and for the sake of euphony. At least the most luxurious of the young college gentlemen were content with the tiniest of bedrooms behind the low-roofed little parlour; while for most the single room sufficed, where the bed was hustled aside into a corner by the table and the great elbow chair; and not a few were thankful for houseroom in the attics, where at least they had slates between them and the sky, although they had to stoop their shoulders when they stood up, and sit over a fire that smoked perpetually. It was as well for them that they were not particular about their fare, for their landladies' notions as to cookery were primitive. Most of them happily had hearty appetites, with the means of satisfying them, as might be seen in their full, honest faces and sturdy figures. Many, like David, were of a ruddy complexion, which matched the very common colour of their hair; and many, no doubt, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, thrived marvellously on porridge in place of pulse. But there were others who had melancholy tales to tell, had they chosen to take the world into their confidence and ask for charity or pity—men who had been brought up in as pinching straits as the Breton *klomek*, and who were solving the problem of the maximum of work on the minimum that might keep body and soul together. Nothing short of sturdy Scottish pride and independence could have inspired them for that sustained and silent struggle; and though people might look and surmise, nobody could say for certain that the Spartan's fox, in the shape of perpetual hunger, was gnawing at their vitals and the roots of their working powers.

To such men the change of scene and climate, when the session had been brought to a close, came as a blessed relief. Not a change to Madeira or the Cornice, to the keen air of the Engadine or the invigorating seclusion of the Rigi Haltbad; but back to the hard bodily work, to the rising with the break of day, to the rough exposure on their native hills or in the storm-beaten little boroughs on the Northern Firths. There at least they were earning enough to fill their bellies, and were expanding their lungs in the fresh ozone. And there was

another class who needed change and relaxation as much, although experiencing no actual privation—the youths whose rude health began sorely to be sapped under the strain of ever-increasing application. For it was the theory of the college life that each hour of the day must be economised. The session was short enough, and the students were bound to make the most of it, and get full value for their money. Even boys who were naturally indolent, and who had loitered away the best of the day, felt constrained to trifle with their books and notes after dark, on into the most unholy hours in the morning, more especially when the final examinations were drawing near. And there were many who kept their faces to the grindstone in earnest, although their object was too plainly defeating itself. The table was heaped with the books and papers, which were swept aside at meal-times to clear a corner for the cloth. The little casements were opened far too seldom—a bad habit of the Scotch rural population, who counteract its injurious consequences in the country by living so much in the open air. These lads would make a practice of hurrying back from their classes to that sickening routine of tainted atmosphere, and there they would sit, nodding over their books and straining their eyes by the flare of the gas or the dim flicker of the single tallow candle. No wonder that their heads began to ache, that their cheeks grew pale and hollow, that flagging of their energy followed loss of appetite. No wonder that the memory was less and less reliable, and that they became more and more helplessly dependent on the memoranda accumulating in voluminous note-books. As the time went on, they not only borrowed from the night but drew more freely on the morning. They would set alarm-clocks, or make arrangements with the night-watchman to waken them out of their feverish slumbers; and, getting up in the cold and darkness to kindle their own fires, they literally burned the candle at both ends.

In any circumstances such liberties with immature constitutions must have been equally short-sighted and dangerous. They might have been hazarded with greater impunity, however, had exercise been the habit of the place. But in the Northern universities, at least in the days of which we are telling, muscular training was absolutely neglected. There were no such things as cricket or boating-clubs. Curling and golf had scarcely spread to the north of the Tay, although of course the archiepiscopal city of St. Andrews has always been the head-quarters of the latter. Shinty and foot-ball had been left behind at the grammar and parish schools with marbles and other boyish things. Walking for walking's sake led to nothing, and obviously served no practical purpose. Yet the surrounding county, though scarcely very attractive to a southron, had a distinct picturesqueness of its own, and might well have tempted native pedestrians, to say nothing of naturalists and sportsmen. Mr. Smiles has described it admirably in his *Life of the "Banffshire Naturalist."* Within a mile or two of the old college, from the haughs of Grandholm down to the Brig of Bulgownie, the Don ran winding to

the low spits of sand through which it had lurked a narrow channel to the sea. From their rooms in the long ascending street the students could listen to the murmur of the rollers, that were breaking in lines of surf against the links of the "bents" or sandhills. Within that natural hillwork, heaped up by the gales in sand-drifts, there stretched the broad expanse of the links, enamelled in the spring-time with sea-pinks and daisies, and blowing with patches of the yellow gorse. In winter, in the long hard frosts, the rivulets that intersected them, and the pools that were left behind by the high spring tides, were haunted by all manner of migrants and sea birds. Strings of geese were seen winging their flight to the southward, pitching occasionally in the rollers of the bay. Ducks and divers of every species were bobbing about among the waves off the mouth of the river, while gulls were stooping and fishing in the sand-coloured shallows. The damp beach and the mudbanks were alive with sand-snipe and denlings: you could hear the shrill piping of the flocks of lapwings who had shifted down to the shore from their breeding grounds in the fallows and uplands. Such sights and sounds should have had their charms for lads who had been born and bred in the country, and who very probably only the year before had been giving themselves over to the joys of bird-nesting in defiance of the keepers and the lairds. But it was not so. There was free shooting along the links, and as yet there was no Wild-birds' Preservation Act; yet divers and waders might feed in security, so far as the proclivities of the students were concerned.

There was no want of animal spirits originally, however, although they might be toned down subsequently. The sign of becoming a member of the university was the assumption of the scarlet gown, and it might be assumed that that symbol of incipient manhood would be treated with respect approaching to reverence. But on the contrary it was *de rigueur* among them to rend it into tatters, probably from a dislike to seem the novices they were. It was impossible altogether to dim the fresh splendour of the scarlet, although something might be done in that way by judicious aspersion with ink; but it was at all events easy to tear the gown. The steady men, who were superior to such weaknesses and fully alive to the value of their shillings, would go about comparatively respectable and unmolested. But the juniors laid themselves out for regular horse-play, and the work of destruction went on apace. In the opening days of the session the college quadrangle and precincts were strewn with shreds and patches of scarlet, that looked like the traces of a sanguinary engagement, if these chanced to be seen lying on the ground. Occasionally the destruction was carried a trifle too far, and an over-zealous combatant, who had been in the thick of the fray, would emerge with merely a collar and a shoulder-strap—the loose flowing sleeves, never meant for use, were cut off by everybody as a matter of course. Then the shame of his nakedness would force itself on the notice of some professor, who in less flagrant cases made a prac-

tice of winking; and, a sadder and a poorer man, he would be sent back a second time to the outfitter. The wearing a tattered gown was a caprice of fashion, but the cap had to be dismantled as a matter of comfort. Anywhere, but especially in that blustering climate, it would have been impossible for the shallow skullpiece to hold the square of pasteboard on the head; and when the pasteboard was removed, the cap tumbled about the ears like the fantastic headdress of a jester in an Italian opera. So that altogether, although the bands of students in red threw warm patches of light against the dingy grey granite of the old town, it was distance that lent enchantment to the view, and they looked anything but academical on more close inspection.

Indeed, those fresh-caught students, before they had time to sober them, might have reminded one very much of the juvenile imps of the Sorbonne, as Victor Hugo describes these in his *Notre Dame de Paris*, awaiting the arrival of the Flemish envoys. For one thing, there was a large infusion of the Celtic blood among them, and it is a proof, by the way, of the old relations between the schools of Paris and those of Aberdeen, that the familiar *sobriquet* of the first-year students is French slang,—for *bojeant* is merely a corruption of *blanc bec*. Indeed, the first of the Principals was brought over from the University of Paris to accept the presidency of the King's College—that is, the College of King James III. There were two forms of authorised dissipation in which the more mercurial temperaments found legitimate outlets. One was a most remarkable local institution called “the lobby,” which was at all events respectable so far as its antiquity could make it so, and was therefore warmly upheld and encouraged by the *laudatores temporis acti* among the Dons. The lobby was simply a weekly dance, held on Saturday evenings in an upper chamber of the college. It was kept strictly select, inasmuch as neither strangers nor ladies were admitted on any account. The correct ball costume was shooting coats and double-soled boots; the refreshments, oranges and bottled malt liquors; the music, a couple of cracked fiddles. And there, for two mortal hours or more, the muscular patrons of the dance disported themselves in wild carnival. Gradually they grew more excited and more frenzied, like a college of dancing dervishes at Stamboul; while the flooring creaked and groaned, and the rafters rang to their shrieks in the reels. It was a sight to see them, entwined in each other's arms, jolting woefully out of time and step through the mazes of the ponderous waltz; for they were very much more at home in the reels, when they swung madly round in the “hoolachan.” But unfortunately it was not the bookworms, but the gayest *viveurs* who indulged in that violent and exhilarating exercise by way of preparing for the rest of the blessed Sabbath.

The other form of recognised recreation was intellectual, yet occasionally it was productive of almost greater excitement. Members of the debating society kept comparatively calm while they were arguing such abstract topics as instinct *versus* reason in animals, or the comparative

genius of Hannibal and Scipio. But they grew heated enough in all conscience when they risked themselves once in the month on some burning political question. Then the fervid orator would be hurried away by his feelings into impassioned obliviousness of his self-consciousness; and out of that stage he would pass into the settled conviction that the opponent whose sophistries he was exposing and denouncing was the incarnate embodiment of principles he abhorred. If he were of Celtic race, his fire came naturally to him; while if he were a lowland Scot, he would show what depths of earnestness may be swelling under a seemingly phlegmatic exterior. It was a fierce give-and-take fight, in which sharp personalities were sometimes exchanged; but it must be owned that the most turbulent spirits were always amenable to authority. The president had no sinecure, but he seldom spoke in vain. And after all it was admirable training for youths who were more at home in the structure of the Latin than in the niceties of the English tongue, and the mass of whom were putting themselves in training for pulpit oratory.

Of society, properly speaking, there was none, and there was not much sociability. Some college intimacies were formed; acquaintances and fellow-lodgers would drop into each other's rooms for a "news" over things in general, as it was expressively termed. But there were no dinners, no suppers, no wines—nothing that tempted to the expenditure either of time or money. It would have sorely puzzled the honest landlady to send up a *petit dîner soigné*, and a college cook or public confectioner must have starved for lack of custom. Two-thirds of the students, save the sons of the ministers who came out of the manses, had probably never tasted wine in their lives; and even in many of the manses, the decanters were only produced on solemn occasions, and notably during the hospitable entertainments of the "sacrament week." Whisky toddy was the popular beverage, and even that, it is fair to remark, was used with extreme moderation. Now and then two or three cronies would draw together of a Saturday, "at e'en," for a "crack" over the tumblers and kettle, and these cheery little symposia might be prolonged into the small hours. But it would have been all the better for the recluses had such harmless conviviality been more common. If a lad were addicted to drink, he drank in solitude and secrecy; anyone overtaken in public would have lost caste and consideration irretrievably, and been made to point the moral of the Spartan's helot with a profusion of scandalized moralists to preach it.

I have seen some of the professors who felt bound to show a certain civility to their young charges; but theirs was doubtful hospitality after all. For these entertainments usually took the form of breakfasts, and would have been formidable enough in any case. It was no joke to make one's *début* in high society in the presence of the dignified don you superstitiously regarded as a phenomenon of erudition, and one of the masters of your fate to boot in his capacity as a member of the senatus. But though these professors of the old school were gentlemen and kindly

gentlemen, there was inevitably a certain pomposity in their bearing, and they could not unbend themselves at will. The chill of the morning and a fasting condition can hardly be favourable, at the best of times, to genial intercourse. The guests presented themselves by twos and threes for mutual protection. The modest pull at the bell was followed by an industrious polishing of boots on the door mats. That was the northern expression of the Oriental custom of removing the shoes in presence of a superior; and moreover each moment of delay was so much gained in the meantime. But there was no help for it, and the onward move must be made; with the resolution of a brave man, who has been screwing his courage to the sticking place, the head of the forlorn hope forced the passage of the dining-room door. The host, who, from long experience, knew precisely what he might expect, looked round upon stiff figures, distorted into constrained attitudes, and into eyes that shrank from his own, only to seek them nervously again. Under friendly compulsion, the party were settled into seats; some balancing themselves dexterously upon chairs, with their legs thrust back at an angle which aggravated the difficulties of the feat: the rest huddled side by side upon sofas, like kittiwakes on the ledge of a cliff in the Hebrides. So that the entertainer was cordially and effusively grateful, when by a piece of good fortune he found that one of the party could hold up his head like a man, and talk without visible embarrassment. The adjournment to the breakfast-room came as a temporary relief, although in many cases it proved a descent to a more hopelessly unhappy circle of the Purgatory. There the extremity of passive shyness must be translated into compromising action. There was all the embarrassment of handling knives and forks and eggspoons, with the impossibility of giving calm consideration to the behaviour, when the faculties were half paralysed and the brain in the direct confusion. The presence of the ladies of the family added a keener poignancy to torments that had already been hard to endure. The circulation of guaiacs of potent usquebaugh would have been a wholesome innovation in the circumstances. A suspicion of a stimulant taken in time would have placed all parties on a much more comfortable footing; for the entertainer fully intended to be kind, and the guests knew it, and would remember him gratefully. But happily the most tedious state banquet must have an end, and it almost repaid the victims for the sufferings they had undergone, when, in the exquisite sense of recovered freedom, they pounced upon their caps in the hall and slammed the hospitable door behind them.

Notwithstanding such occasional ceremonial acts of self-sacrifice, the professors had anything but a bad time of it. Many of them were scions of old Highland families, who had had an hereditary connection with the university for generations. Partly from fixed incomes, chiefly from class fees, they were in the enjoyment of what was a snug independence in a place where the living was quiet and cheap. Not so cheap certainly as at the date of the university's foundation, about the year 1500. Then

Bishop Elphinston, the munificent founder, persuaded the eminent scholar and historian, Hector Boyce—Latinized Boethius—to resign his philosophical chair in the College of Montaigu or Montis Acuti, to leave the congenial literary society he enjoyed in Paris, and to accept the supervision of the new Northern university. It seems highly improbable that Elphinston meant to behave shabbily, but Boyce's academical revenues were fixed at the modest sum of forty marks, or 2*l.* 4*s.* 4*d.* sterling. On which Dr. Johnson remarks in his *Tour to the Hebrides*: "In the present age of trade and taxes it is difficult even for the imagination so to raise the value of money, or so to diminish the demands of life, as to suppose four and forty shillings an honourable stipend; yet it was probably equal, not only to the needs but to the rank of Boethius. The wealth of England was undoubtedly to that of Scotland more than five to one; and it is known that Henry I., among whose faults avarice was never reckoned, granted to Roger Ascham, as a reward of his learning, a pension of ten pounds a year." As matter of fact, however, we may conclude that the principal's appointments must have been small, even for Aberdeenshire, at the close of the fifteenth century. For happily for him he became a pluralist, and only five years later was appointed by the town council to be chaplain of the altar of St. Ninian in the Church of St. Nicholas, where his emoluments as chaplain and confessor were 5*l.* 10*s.* Subsequently the king assigned him a pension which brought him in some shillings more than his principalship, and finally he was presented to the benefice of Tyrie with a stipend of one hundred marks. Now Tyrie was then, as now, one of the most out-of-the-way of country parishes, and it seems strange that 40 per cent. of its annual value should have been considered a suitable endowment for a college dignitary of the rank and fame of Hector Boethius.

A propos to old-fashioned professors, a digression comes in not altogether inappropriately, simply from the force of old recollections. It was just the sort of inconsequent dissertation that one of them might have favoured you with had you chanced to make passing reference to Boyce in calling to discuss some matter of business. They took life very easily in a literary leisure that was intelligent rather than intellectual. Even those who filled the classical chairs had no great inducement to improve their acquaintance with the poets and historians of Greece and Rome. Year after year, especially in "Humanity" (Latin) and in Greek, they had to begin again at the beginning, teaching schoolboys from elementary reading-books. Had they thrown their souls into their work, they must have been profoundly discouraged by the drudgery. A lad was called up at random to read and construe a sentence or two of Livy or a few lines of Virgil; which he did, more or less creditably, rendering the original in matter-of-fact fashion. When the practice of Latin composition had served his turn by giving him the chance of gaining a scholarship, he cast it behind him once and for ever. No time was squandered in writing verses. The youths who applied themselves were admirably

grounded in the dead languages, but they rarely rose to the refined appreciation of their beauties. So in mathematics the professor commenced by herding his class across the troublesome pass of the Pons Asinorum, and it was much the same with natural philosophy. It is true that the practical Scottish mind takes kindly to the exact sciences, and that occasionally a man of talent who had made his mark in the north went south to take high honours at Cambridge; but the professors, who were really schoolmasters, felt indifferent to their task-work or superior to it. Things had gone on much as they were from time immemorial, and it seemed idle or suicidal to attempt innovations; they could no more increase the age of the applicants for entrance, or force them through a higher preliminary training, than they could add so many cubits to their stature by *senatus-consultum*.

At the same time, and more specially in mathematics and natural science, some of the older students made very wonderful progress. They started from the first proposition of Euclid and the rudimentary principles of algebra, but their work was cut out for them day after day; they were shoved along somehow by stages that were neither short nor easy, and the examinations at the end of the session were no child's play. Indeed, had the rules as to answering a certain proportion of the questions been strictly enforced, a large proportion of the class must have been plucked. But it was not the habit of the college to be hard upon anybody, and theoretical severity was tempered in practice. In the first place, those who had no hope of honours were wont to take precautions in the way of notes and cribs, in which the professors told off to mount guard were supposed to be tacit accomplices. And in any case a lad with a respectable memory and average composure was absolutely safe; for a full half of the examination sheet might as well have been stereotyped year after year, or, at all events, it was a faithful compilation from its predecessors of the last few seasons; so that any careless sinner could save himself by sharp cramming at the eleventh hour, and if he were brought within the category of the one or two yearly examples that were made, his incorrigible stupidity must have deserved its fate. The real tug of the struggle came in the second half of the questions, and these were gradually worked up to a climax of intricacy which was a searching test of comparative merit. The system may have left a good deal to desire, but it worked satisfactorily enough in a college where the professors were mainly paid by the fees, and where the students in their obvious self-interest had every inducement to exertion. So it had come to be thoroughly understood that things were to be made comfortable in that way, when some changes occurred in the professorial staff, and revolutionary blood was infused into the *senatus*. Then the easy-going old northern doctors were put upon their mettle, and of a sudden they became almost more subversive than the unwelcome innovators themselves. One fine morning a shock of horror and surprise ran round the mathematical examination hall. There were stupefaction and disgust in the faces of

the most sagacious of the shirkers when they ran their eyes over a list of problems as strange and insoluble to them as the quadrature of the circle. Their worthy old teacher was almost more embarrassed; he shrank shyly from the reproachful *et-tu-Brute* looks which converged upon him from all quarters of the room. He felt he had been guilty of a dishonourable act in violating a time-honoured understanding without breathing a syllable of warning. He winked harder than ever at surreptitious consultations, but a good half of his victims were helpless; for there was no helping each other where all were equally abroad. However, on that occasion they were quit from the fright and from a week of agonizing suspense, till results were officially proclaimed. Half the class ought to have been plucked on their demerits, but there was a tacit act of indemnity passed, and nobody came to grief at all. However, the warning had to be laid to heart, for that emotional morning closed the old régime, and in future the examinations were slightly more serious.

From one cause or another the students tailed off pretty fast during the four years of the rapid curriculum. The short five months' session was a convenient arrangement, in so far as it curtailed the expenses of men living away from home. But, on the other hand, the seven months' recess seemed to involve a serious waste of time to those who had no paying occupation to fall back upon. Schoolmasters who had been suffered to look up substitutes, went back to their desks. Some students found temporary engagements in teaching; but the most of them, in the language of the stable, were more or less eating their heads off. It is true that they had the shelter of the paternal roof, and "the run of their teeth" under it; but if they had begun to have misgivings as to their capacity for study or the spiritual vocation which was so generally to be their destiny, they turned back from the plough and struck away into side paths. By the time the "bajeants" of the first year had come to the dignity of "magistrands" in the fourth, instead of numbering over a hundred, they might be reduced to forty or fifty. But the dwindled band had done credit to their training, and on the whole had made the most of their advantages. As the gowns that had been so ruthlessly pulled about years before, although woefully docked of their fair proportions, had been patched and darned till they looked almost respectable again, so the wearers had softened their roughness of manner. They might still feel like fishes out of water in a drawing-room, or in the cloisters of Cambridge or Oxford, if they had changed the scene of their studies. But many of them had earned the right to be called gentlemen, and were of the stuff that is sure to be respected in any society. A very few went into promiscuous professions. Not a few matriculated in the medical schools. But most, in obedience to their original impulses, gravitated inevitably into the Church.

They regarded the close of their college career with very mingled feelings. The life had often been rough and hard, but then it was in keeping with their earlier habits, and they had expected nothing else, while, on

the other hand, there was the satisfaction of looking back upon difficulties successfully overcome by strenuous efforts and self-denial.

Their faculties had been fairly tested, and if they had an average quantity of "nous," they had learned pretty nearly what was in them. They had done something to improve their natural powers of speech—an indispensable accomplishment for the Scotch clergyman, who, though he may read his discourse and be more considered in consequence, should be able to speak "a word in season," and must in every case be voluble in extemporary prayer. And they had made friends and acquaintances who were sure to be near them through life. The clergymen in the presbytery or synod who had not been actual contemporaries, had at all events gone through almost identical experiences, so they all came together on common grounds of feeling. It was much for a youth in a farmhouse or cottage, who had had his teaching at a parish school, possibly in some lonely strath in the Highlands, to be launched in a new world of intelligence, limited as that little world might be. In short, their unsophisticated nature went through a course of refinement and cultivation which on the whole was excellently adapted to its objects; while they had been kept singularly free from the snares and temptations inseparable from higher and more artificial society. If their constitutions suffered, it was from over-study, and no one of them had even the opportunity of encumbering himself with debt. Things have no doubt been changing since the days of which we have been writing; but we are sure that the outlines of our picture must still be tolerably faithful, since it is based on hard conditions of severity which may gradually be modified, but can never be revolutionised.

Canossa.

ITALY is less the land of what is venerable in antiquity, than of beauty, by divine right young eternally in spite of age. This is due partly to her history and art and literature, partly to the temper of the races who have made her what she is, and partly to her natural advantages. Her oldest architectural remains, the temples of Paestum and Girgenti, or the gates of Perugia and Volterra, are so adapted to Italian landscape and so graceful in their massive strength, that we forget the centuries which have passed over them. We leap as by a single bound from the times of Roman greatness to the new birth of humanity in the fourteenth century, forgetting the many years during which Italy, like the rest of Europe, was buried in what our ancestors called Gothic barbarism. The illumination cast upon the classic period by the literature of Rome and by the memory of her great men is so vivid, that we feel the days of the Republic and the Empire to be near us; while the Italian Renaissance is so truly a revival of that former splendour, a resumption of the music interrupted for a season, that it is extremely difficult to form any conception of the five long centuries which elapsed between the Lombard invasion in 568 and the accession of Hildebrand to the Pontificate in 1073. So true is it that nothing lives and has reality for us but what is spiritual, intellectual, self-possessed in personality and consciousness. When the Egyptian priest said to Solon, "You Greeks are always children," he intended a gentle sarcasm, but he implied a compliment; for the quality of imperishable youth belonged to the Hellenic spirit, and has become the heritage of every race which partook of it. And this spirit in no common degree has been shared by the Italians of the earlier and the later classic epoch. The land is full of monuments pertaining to those two brilliant periods; and whenever the voice of poet has spoken, or the hand of artist has been at work, that spirit, as distinguished from the spirit of mediævalism, has found expression.

Yet it must be remembered that during the five centuries above mentioned Italy was given over to Lombards, Franks, and Germans. Feudal institutions, alien to the social and political ideals of the classic world, took a firm hold on the country. The Latin element remained silent, passive, in abeyance, undergoing an important transformation. It was in the course of those five hundred years that the Italians as a modern people, separable from their Roman ancestors, were formed. At the close of this obscure passage in Italian history, their communes, the foundation of Italy's future independence, and the source of her peculiar

national development, appeared in all the vigour and audacity of youth. At its close the Italian genius presented Europe with its greatest triumph of constructive ability, the Papacy. At its close again the series of supreme artistic achievements, starting with the architecture of churches and public palaces, passing on to sculpture and painting, and culminating in music, which only ended with the temporary extinction of national vitality in the seventeenth century, was simultaneously begun in all the provinces of the peninsula.

So important were these five centuries of incubation for Italy, and so little is there left of them to arrest the attention of the student, dazzled as he is by the ever-living splendours of Greece, Rome, and the Renaissance, that a visit to the ruins of Canossa is almost a duty. There, in spite of himself, by the very isolation and forlorn abandonment of what was once so formidable a seat of feudal despotism and ecclesiastical tyranny, he is forced to confront the obscure but mighty spirit of the middle ages. There, if anywhere, the men of those iron-hearted times anterior to the Crusades will acquire distinctness for his imagination, when he recalls the three main actors in the drama enacted on the summit of Canossa's rock in the bitter winter of 1077.

Canossa lies almost due south of Reggio d'Emilia, upon the slopes of the Apennines. Starting from Reggio, the carriage-road keeps to the plain for some while in a westerly direction, and then bends away towards the mountains. As we approach their spurs, the ground begins to rise. The rich Lombard tilth of maize and vine gives place to English-looking hedgerows, lined with oaks, and studded with handsome dark tufts of green hellebore. The hills descend in melancholy earth-heaps on the plain, crowned here and there with ruined castles. Four of these mediæval strongholds, called Bianello, Montevetro, Monteluzzo, and Montezano, give the name of Quattro Castelli to the commune. The most important of them, Bianello, which, next to Canossa, was the strongest fortress possessed by the Countess Matilda and her ancestors, still presents a considerable mass of masonry, roofed, and habitable. The group formed a kind of advance-guard for Canossa against attack from Lombardy. After passing Quattro Castelli we enter the hills, climbing gently upwards between barren slopes of ashy grey earth—the *débris* of most ancient Apennines—crested at favourable points with lonely towers. In truth the whole country bristles with ruined forts, making it clear that during the middle ages Canossa was but the centre of a great military system, the core and kernel of a fortified position which covered an area to be measured by scores of square miles, reaching far into the mountains, and buttressed on the plain. As yet, however, after nearly two hours' driving Canossa has not come in sight. At last a turn in the road discloses an opening in the valley of the Enza to the left: up this lateral gorge we see first the Castle of Rossena on its knoll of solid red rock, flaming in the sunlight; and then, further withdrawn, detached from all surrounding objects, and reared aloft as though to sweep the sea

of waved and broken hills around it, a sharp horn of hard white stone. That is Canossa—the *alba Canossa*, the *candida petra* of its rhyming chronicler. There is no mistaking the commanding value of its situation. At the same time the brilliant whiteness of Canossa's rocky hill, contrasted with the red gleam of Rossena, and outlined against the prevailing dulness of these earthy Apennines, secures a picturesque individuality concordant with its unique history and unrivalled strength.

There is still a journey of two hours before the castle can be reached; and this may be performed on foot or horseback. The path winds upward over broken ground; following the *arête* of curiously jumbled and thwarted hill-slopes; passing beneath the battlements of Rossena, whence the unfortunate Everelina threw herself in order to escape the savage love of her lord and jailor; and then skirting those horrid earthen *balze* which are so common and so unattractive a feature of Apennine scenery. The most hideous *balze* to be found in the length and breadth of Italy are probably those of Volterra, from which the citizens themselves recoil with a kind of terror, and which lure melancholy men by intolerable fascination on to suicide. For ever crumbling, altering with frost and rain, discharging gloomy glaciers of slow-crawling mud, and scarring the hillside with tracts of barrenness, these earth-precipices are among the most ruinous and uncomfortable failures of nature. They have not even so much of wildness or grandeur as forms the saving merit of nearly all wasteful things in the world, and can only be classed with the desolate *ghiare* of Italian river-beds.

Such as they are, these *balze* form an appropriate preface to the gloomy and repellent isolation of Canossa. The rock towers from a narrow platform to the height of rather more than 160 feet from its base. The top is fairly level, forming an irregular triangle, of which the greatest length is about 260 feet, and the width about 100 feet. Scarcely a vestige of any building can be traced either upon the platform or the summit, with the exception of a broken wall and windows supposed to belong to the end of the sixteenth century. The ancient castle, with its triple circuit of walls, enclosing barracks for the garrison, lodgings for the lord and his retainers, a stately church, a sumptuous monastery, storehouses, stables, workshops, and all the various buildings of a fortified stronghold, have utterly disappeared. The very passage of approach cannot be ascertained; for it is doubtful whether the present irregular path that scales the western face of the rock, be really the remains of some old staircase corresponding to that by which Mont St. Michel in Normandy is ascended. One thing is tolerably certain—that the three walls of which we hear so much from the chroniclers, and which played so picturesque a part in the drama of Henry IV.'s penance, surrounded the cliff at its base, and embraced a large acreage of ground. The citadel itself must have been but the acropolis or keep of an extensive fortress.

There has been plenty of time since the year 1255, when the people

of Reggio sacked and destroyed Canossa, for Nature to resume her undisputed sway by obliterating the handiwork of men ; and at present Nature forms the chief charm of Canossa. Lying one afternoon of May on the crisp short grass at the edge of a precipice purple with iris in full blossom, I surveyed, from what were once the battlements of Matilda's castle, a prospect than which there is none more spirit-stirring by reason of its beauty and its manifold associations in Europe. The lower castle-crowded hills have sunk. Reggio lies at our feet, shut in between the crests of Monte Carboniano and Monte delle Celle. Beyond Reggio stretches Lombardy—the fairest and most memorable battle-field of nations, the richest and most highly cultivated garden of civilised industry. Nearly all the Lombard cities may be seen, some of them faint like bluish films of vapour, some clear with dome and spire. There is Modena and her Ghirlandina. Carpi, Parma, Mirandola, Verona, Mantua, lie well-defined and russet on the flat green map ; and there flashes a bend of lordly Po ; and there the Euganeans rise like islands, telling us where Padua and Ferrara nestle in the amethystine haze. Beyond and above all to the northward sweep the Alps, tossing their silvery crests up into a cloudless sky from the violet mist that girds their flanks and drowns their basements. Monte Adamello and the Ortler, the cleft of the Brenner, and the sharp peaks of the Venetian Alps are all distinctly visible. An eagle flying straight from our eyrie might traverse Lombardy and light among the snow-fields of the Valteline between sunrise and sundown. Nor is the prospect tame to southward. Here the Apennines roll, billow above billow, in majestic desolation, soaring to snow summits in the Pellegrino region. As our eye attempts to thread that labyrinth of hill and vale, we tell ourselves that those roads wind to Tuscany, and yonder stretches Garfagnana, where Ariosto lived and mused in honourable exile from the world he loved.

It was by one of the mountain passes that lead from Lucca northward that the first founder of Canossa is said to have travelled early in the tenth century. Sigifredo, if the tradition may be trusted, was very wealthy ; and with his money he bought lands and signorial rights at Reggio, bequeathing to his children, when he died about 945, a patrimony which they developed into a petty kingdom. Azzo, his second son, fortified Canossa, and made it his principal place of residence. When Lothair, King of Italy, died in 950, leaving his beautiful widow to the ill-treatment of his successor, Berenger, Adelaide found a protector in this Azzo. She had been imprisoned on the Lake of Garda ; but managing to escape in man's clothes to Mantua, she thence sent news of her misfortunes to Canossa. Azzo lost no time in riding with his knights to her relief, and brought her back in safety to his mountain fastness. It is related that Azzo was afterwards instrumental in calling Otho into Italy and procuring his marriage with Adelaide, in consequence of which events Italy became a fief of the Empire. Owing to the part he played at this time, the Lord of Canossa was recognised as one of the most powerful

vassals of the German Emperor in Lombardy. Honours were heaped upon him; and he grew so rich and formidable that Berenger, the titular King of Italy, laid siege to his fortress of Canossa. The memory of this siege, which lasted for three years and a half, is said still to linger in the popular traditions of the place. When Azzo died at the end of the tenth century, he left to his son Tedaldo the title of Count of Reggio and Modena; and this title was soon after raised to that of Marquis. The Marches governed as Vicar of the Empire by Tedaldo included Reggio, Modena, Ferrara, Brescia, and probably Mantua. They stretched, in fact, across the north of Italy, forming a quadrilateral between the Alps and Apennines. Like his father, Tedaldo adhered consistently to the Imperial party; and when he died and was buried at Canossa, he in his turn bequeathed to his son Bonifazio a power and jurisdiction increased by his own abilities. Bonifazio held the state of a sovereign at Canossa, adding the duchy of Tuscany to his father's fiefs, and meeting the allied forces of the Lombard barons in the field of Coviolo like an independent potentate. His power and splendour were great enough to rouse the jealousy of the Emperor; but Henry III. seems to have thought it more prudent to propitiate this proud vassal, and to secure his kindness, than to attempt his humiliation. Bonifazio married Beatrice, daughter of Frederick, Duke of Lorraine—her whose marble sarcophagus in the Campo Santo at Pisa is said to have inspired Niccola Pisano with his new style of sculpture. Their only child, Matilda, was born, probably at Lucca, in 1046; and six years after her birth Bonifazio, who had swayed his subjects like an iron-handed tyrant, was murdered. To the great house of Canossa, the rulers of one-third of Italy, there now remained only two women, Bonifazio's widow Beatrice, and his daughter Matilda. Beatrice married Godfrey, Duke of Lorraine, who was recognised by Henry IV. as her husband and as feudatory of the Empire in the full place of Boniface. He died about 1070; and in this year Matilda was married by proxy to his son, Godfrey the Hunchback, whom, however, she did not see till the year 1072. The marriage was not a happy one; and the question has even been disputed among Matilda's biographers whether it was ever consummated. At any rate it did not last long; for Godfrey was killed at Antwerp in 1076. In this year Matilda also lost her mother, Beatrice, who died at Pisa, and was buried in the cathedral.

By this rapid enumeration of events it will be seen how the power and honours of the house of Canossa, including Tuscany, Spoleto, and the fairest portions of Lombardy, had devolved upon a single woman of the age of thirty at the moment when the fierce quarrel between Pope and Emperor began in the year 1076. Matilda was destined to play a great, a striking, and a tragic part in the opening drama of Italian history. Her decided character and uncompromising course of action have won for her the name of *la gran donna d'Italia*, and have caused her memory to be blessed or execrated according as the temporal pretensions and spiritual tyranny of the Papacy may have found sup-

porters or opponents in posterity. She was reared from childhood in habits of austerity and unquestioning piety. Submission to the Church became for her not merely a rule of conduct, but a passionate enthusiasm. She identified herself with the cause of four successive Popes protected her idol, the terrible and iron-hearted Hildebrand, in the time of his adversity; remained faithful to his principles after his death; and having served the Holy See with all her force and all that she possessed through all her life-time, she bequeathed her vast dominions to it on her death-bed. Like some of the greatest mediæval characters—like Hildebrand himself—Matilda was so thoroughly of one piece, that she towers above the mists of ages with the massive grandeur of an incarnated idea. She is for us the living statue of a single thought, an undivided impulse, the more than woman born to represent her age. Nor was it without reason that Dante symbolised in her the love of Holy Church; though students of the *Purgatory* will hardly recognise the lovely maiden, singing and plucking flowers beside the stream of Lethe, in the stern and warlike chatelaine of Canossa. Unfortunately we know but little of Matilda's personal appearance. Her health was not strong; and it is said to have been weakened, especially in her last illness, by ascetic observances. Yet she headed her own troops, armed with sword and cuirass, avoiding neither peril nor fatigue in the quarrels of her master Gregory. Up to the year 1622 two strong suits of mail were preserved at Quattro Castelli, which were said to have been worn by her in battle, and which were afterwards sold on the market-place at Reggio. This habit of donning armour does not, however, prove that Matilda was exceptionally vigorous; for in those savage times she could hardly have played the part of heroine without participating personally in the dangers of warfare.

No less monumental in the plastic unity of his character was the monk Hildebrand, who for twenty years before his elevation to the Papacy had been the maker of Popes and the creator of the policy of Rome. When he was himself elected in the year 1073, and had assumed the name of Gregory VII., he immediately began to put in practice the plans for Church aggrandisement he had slowly matured during the previous quarter of a century. To free the Church from its subservience to the Empire, to assert the Pope's right to ratify the election of the Emperor and to exercise the right of jurisdiction over him, to place ecclesiastical appointments in the sole power of the Roman See, and to render the celibacy of the clergy obligatory, were the points he had resolved to carry. Taken singly and together, these chief aims of Hildebrand's policy had but one object—the magnification of the Church at the expense both of the people and of secular authorities, and the further separation of the Church from the ties and sympathies of common life that bound it to humanity. To accuse Hildebrand of personal ambition would be but shallow criticism, though it is clear that his inflexible and puissant nature found a savage selfish pleasure in trampling upon power and humbling pride at warfare with his own. Yet his was in no sense an

egotistic purpose like that which moved the Popes of the Renaissance to dismember Italy for their bastards. Hildebrand, like Matilda, was himself the creature of a great idea. These two potent personalities completely understood each other, and worked towards a single end. The mythopœic fancy might conceive of them as the male and female manifestations of one dominant faculty, the spirit of ecclesiastical dominion incarnate in a man and woman of almost superhuman mould.

Opposed to them, as the third actor in the drama of Canossa, was a man of feebler mould. Henry IV., King of Italy, but not yet crowned Emperor, had none of his opponents' unity of purpose or monumental dignity of character. At war with his German feudatories, browbeaten by rebellious sons, unfaithful and cruel to his wife, vacillating in the measures he adopted to meet his divers difficulties, at one time tormented by his conscience into cowardly submission, and at another treasonably neglectful of the most solemn obligations, Henry was no match for the stern wills against which he was destined to break in unavailing passion. Early disagreements with Gregory had culminated in his excommunication. The German nobles abandoned his cause; and Henry found it expedient to summon a council in Augsburg for the settlement of matters in dispute between the Empire and the Papacy. Gregory expressed his willingness to attend this council, and set forth from Rome accompanied by the Countess Matilda in December, 1076. He did not, however, travel further than Vercelli, for news here reached him that Henry was about to enter Italy at the head of a powerful army. Matilda hereupon persuaded the Holy Father to place himself in safety among her strongholds of Canossa. Thither accordingly Gregory retired before the ending of that year; and bitter were the sarcasms uttered by the imperial partisans in Italy upon this protection offered by a fair countess to the monk who had been made a Pope. The foul calumnies of that bygone age would be unworthy of even so much as this notice, if we did not trace in them the ineradicable Italian tendency to cynical insinuation—a tendency which has involved the history of the Renaissance Popes in an almost impenetrable mist of lies and exaggerations.

Henry was in truth upon his road to Italy, but with a very different attendance from that which Gregory expected. Accompanied by Bertha, his wife, and his boy son Conrad, the Emperor elect left Spire in the condition of a fugitive, crossed Burgundy, spent Christmas at Besançon, and journeyed to the foot of Mont Cenis. It is said that he was followed by a single male servant of mean birth; and if the tale of his adventures during the passage of the Alps can be credited, history presents fewer spectacles more picturesque than the straits to which this representative of the Cæsars, this supreme chief of feudal civility, this ruler destined still to be the leader of mighty armies and the father of a line of monarchs, was exposed. Concealing his real name and state, he induced some shepherds to lead him and his escort through the thick snows to the summit of Mont Cenis; and by the help of these men the Imperial party were afterwards let down the snow-slopes on the further

side by means of ropes. Bertha and her women were sewn up in hides and dragged across the frozen surface of the winter drifts. It was a year memorable for its severity. Heavy snow had fallen in October, which continued ice-bound and unyielding till the following April.

No sooner had Henry reached Turin, than he set forward again in the direction of Canossa. The fame of his arrival had preceded him, and he found that his party was far stronger in Italy than he had ventured to expect. Proximity to the Church of Rome divests its fulminations of half their terrors. The Italian bishops and barons, less superstitious than the Germans, and with greater reason to resent the domineering graspingness of Gregory, were ready to espouse the Emperor's cause. Henry gathered a formidable force as he marched onward across Lombardy; and some of the most illustrious prelates and nobles of the South were in his suite. A more determined leader than Henry proved himself to be, might possibly have forced Gregory to some accommodation, in spite of the strength of Canossa and the Pope's invincible obstinacy, by proper use of these supporters. Meanwhile the adherents of the Church were mustered in Matilda's fortress; among whom may be mentioned Azzo, the progenitor of Este and Brunswick; Hugh, Abbot of Clugny; and the princely family of Piedmont. "I am become a second Rome," exclaims Canossa, in the language of Matilda's rhyming chronicler; "all honours are mine; I hold at once both Pope and King, the princes of Italy and those of Gaul, those of Rome, and those from far beyond the Alps." The stage was ready; the audience had assembled; and now the three great actors were about to meet. Immediately upon his arrival at Canossa, Henry sent for his cousin, the Countess Matilda, and brought her to intercede for him with Gregory. He was prepared to make any concessions or to undergo any humiliations, if only the ban of excommunication might be removed; nor, cowed as he was by his own superstitious conscience, and by the memory of the opposition he had met with from his German vassals, does he seem to have once thought of meeting force with force, and of returning to his northern kingdom triumphant in the overthrow of Gregory's pride. Matilda undertook to plead his cause before the Pontiff. But Gregory was not to be moved so soon to mercy. "If Henry has in truth repented," he replied, "let him lay down crown and sceptre, and declare himself unworthy of the name of king." The only point conceded to the suppliant was that he should be admitted in the garb of a penitent within the precincts of the castle. Leaving his retinue outside the walls, Henry entered the first series of outworks, and was thence conducted to the second, so that between him and the citadel itself there still remained the third of the surrounding bastions. Here he was bidden to wait the Pope's pleasure; and here, in the midst of that bitter winter weather, while the fierce winds of the Apennines were sweeping sleet upon him in their passage from Monte Pellegrino to the plain, he knelt barefoot, clothed in sackcloth, fasting from dawn till eve, for three whole days. On the morning of the fourth day, judging that Gregory was inexorable, and that his suit would not be granted,

Henry retired to the Chapel of St. Nicholas, which stood within this second precinct. There he called to his aid the Abbot of Clugny and the Countess, both of whom were his relations, and who, much as they might sympathise with Gregory, could hardly be supposed to look with satisfaction on their royal kinsman's outrage. The Abbot told Henry that nothing in the world could move the Pope; but Matilda, when in turn he fell before her knees and wept, engaged to do for him the utmost. She probably knew that the moment for unbending had arrived, and that her imperious guest could not with either decency or prudence prolong the outrage offered to the civil chief of Christendom. It was January 25 when the Emperor elect was brought, half dead with cold and misery, into the Pope's presence. There he prostrated himself in the dust, crying aloud for pardon. It is said that Gregory first placed his foot upon Henry's neck, uttering these words of Scripture: "Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis et conculcabis leonem et draconem," and that then he raised him from the earth and formally pronounced his pardon. The prelates and nobles who took part in this scene were compelled to guarantee with their own oaths the vows of obedience pronounced by Henry; so that in the very act of reconciliation a new insult was offered to him. After this Gregory said mass, and permitted Henry to communicate; and at the close of the day a banquet was served, at which the King sat down to meat with the Pope and the Countess.

It is probable that, while Henry's penance was performed in the castle courts beneath the rock, his reception by the Pope, and all that subsequently happened, took place in the citadel itself. But of this we have no positive information. Indeed the silence of the chronicles as to the topography of Canossa is peculiarly unfortunate for lovers of the picturesque in historic detail, now that there is no possibility of tracing the outlines of the ancient building. Had the author of the *Vita Mathildis* (Muratori, vol. v.) foreseen that his beloved Canossa would one day be nothing but a mass of native rock, he would undoubtedly have been more explicit on these points; and much that is vague about an event only paralleled by our Henry II.'s penance before Becket's shrine at Canterbury, might now be clear.

Very little remains to be told about Canossa. During the same year, 1077, Matilda made the celebrated donation of her fiefs to Holy Church. This was accepted by Gregory in the name of St. Peter, and it was confirmed by a second deed during the pontificate of Urban IV. in 1102. Though Matilda subsequently married Guelfo d'Este, son of the Duke of Bavaria, she was speedily divorced from him; nor was there any heir to a marriage ridiculous by reason of disparity of age, the bridegroom being but eighteen, while the bride was forty-three in the year of her second nuptials. During one of Henry's descents into Italy he made an unsuccessful attack upon Canossa, assailing it at the head of a considerable force one October morning in 1092. Matilda's biographer informs us

that the mists of autumn veiled his beloved fortress from the eyes of the beleaguers. They had not even the satisfaction of beholding the unconquished citadel; and, what was more, the banner of the Emperor was seized and dedicated as a trophy in the Church of S. Apollonio. In the following year the Countess opened her gates of Canossa to an illustrious fugitive, Adelaide, the wife of her old foe, Henry, who had escaped with difficulty from the insults and the cruelty of her husband. After Henry's death, his son, the Emperor Henry V., paid Matilda a visit in her castle of Bianello, addressed her by the name of mother, and conferred upon her the vice-regency of Liguria. At the age of sixty-nine she died in 1115 at Bondeno de' Roncori, and was buried, not among her kinsmen at Canossa, but in an abbey of St. Benedict near Mantua. With her expired the main line of the noble house she represented; though Canossa, now made a fief of the Empire in spite of Matilda's donation, was given to a family which claimed descent from Bonifazio's brother Conrad—a young man killed in the battle of Coviolo. This family, in its turn, was extinguished in the year 1570; but a junior branch still exists at Verona. It will be remembered that Michelangelo Buonarroti claimed kinship with the Count of Canossa; and a letter from the Count is extant acknowledging the validity of his pretension.

As far back as 1255 the people of Reggio destroyed the castle; nor did the nobles of Canossa distinguish themselves in subsequent history among those families who based their despotisms on the *débris* of the Imperial power in Lombardy. It seemed destined that Canossa and all belonging to it should remain as a mere name and memory of the outgrown middle ages. Estensi, Carraresi, Visconti, Bentivogli, and Gazaghi belong to a later period of Lombard history, and mark the dawn of the Renaissance.

As I lay and mused that afternoon of May upon the short grass, cropped by two grey goats, whom a little boy was tending, it occurred to me to ask the woman who had served me as guide, whether any legend remained in the country concerning the Countess Matilda. She had often, probably, been asked this question by other travellers. Therefore she was more than usually ready with an answer, which, as far as I could understand her dialect, was this. Matilda was a great and potent witch, whose summons the devil was bound to obey. One day she aspired, alone of all her sex, to say mass; but when the moment came for sacring the elements, a thunderbolt fell from the clear sky, and reduced her to ashes.* That the most single-hearted handmaid of the Holy Church, whose life was one long devotion to its ordinances, should survive in this grotesque myth, might serve to point a satire upon the vanity of earthly fame. The legend in its very extravagance is a fanciful distortion of the truth.

J. A. S.

* I find that this story is common in the country round Canossa. It is mentioned by Professor A. Ferretti in his monograph entitled *Canossa, Studi e Ricerche*, Reggio, 1876, a work to which I am indebted, and which will repay careful study.

War.

Contumelious, beastly, mad-brained war.—*Shakspeare.*

A SHORT time ago the very air seemed to smell of carnage. We heard of nothing but horrors, ominous of further horrors to come. Newspaper correspondents vied with each other in the vivid description of ghastly suffering. Artists sought to bring before our eyes the minutest details of battle-fields, or of fresh ruins significant of brutalities that chill the blood and clench the hands in involuntary spasms. Sometimes we singled out a solitary figure as typical of the mass. We saw the wounded soldier abandoned in snow-covered wastes; we shared the pang of the comrades forced to leave him in his agony, and shuddered as we thought of the ominous forms which might be hidden in the gathering twilight. Sometimes the unit of misery was lost in the crowd. The mind was stunned by the vast masses of accumulated misery; by towns converted into huge hospitals, where a few devoted nurses and surgeons struggled helplessly against an overwhelming aggregation of every variety of torturing pain. Happily—or is it unhappily?—time and space are powerful non-conductors of sympathy. The imagination of many people would be stained for life if they could be in the immediate presence of only one of the multitudinous victims of war. Yet kind, gentle, considerate men and women, who are made wretched for a day by the sight of a gaping wound, and cannot hear a child crying in the street without a pang of distress, can read of such horrors with a feeling—if one must speak the truth—of almost pleasurable excitement. We are in the habit of denouncing the greedy readers of sensation novels. It is wrong, we say, to take pleasure in the account of fictitious crime and misery. What then are we to say to the amiable people, the well-fed citizens, the delicate ladies who can pore over columns of vivid descriptions of sufferings undoubtedly real, and placidly observe that the papers are dull when they are not stuffed full of horrors? What right have we to eat, or drink, or sleep, to go about our pleasures, our business, to indulge in small-talk at tea-parties, and carry wretched little tittle-tattle from one smoking-room to another, whilst these awful skeletons are mouldering in the background? A few hours of railway will take you from commonplace London to the region where the earth has been manured with corpses and the air is thick with pestilence. And yet we can talk and read as quietly as though the whole affair were a grotesque nightmare which had vanished with sleep.

It is an old story. We might put it into a mathematical formula,

Sympathy, like the force of gravitation, varies inversely as some power of the distance ; and its decline may be exhibited in a tabular statement. The toothache of an inmate of our house may affect us as much as the death-agony of a next-door neighbour ; a hundred cases of distress in a remote part of S.W. may trouble the dwellers in Belgravia as much as one in their own square, or as a thousand in E.C. ; a thousand starving wretches in Bethnal Green are as moving as hundreds of thousands in Bulgaria ; and by the time we get round the world, the knowledge that millions are dying in China moves us as much or as little as a paragraph about a single case of wife-beating at our doors. Men are, happily, not reasonable beings ; they may know, but it is altogether impossible to imagine, that as much pain is caused when a train is smashed to atoms beyond the Mississippi as though it were upset on the Metropolitan Railway. Our insensibility is not due to the selfish reflection that our own safety is threatened more in one case than the other. It is simply because the effect upon the imagination and not the statistical formula apprehended by the reason is what really moves our sympathy. A single incident which has some tinge of the disaster ; an accident where there is some piteous touch of domestic pathos, or which is lightened by a flash of heroic self-sacrifice, moves us more than the largest accumulation of dull commonplace agony.

The slightest grief often affects us the most deeply. We are shocked—and rightly—when a pair of lovers are struck dead by lightning. We rightly call it a happy release when an old woman dies, after years of complicated and protracted torments in a hospital. But how much sympathy have we bestowed upon the long course of misery which in the last case has made even death a blessing ? It is merely the catastrophe which affects us ; the ordinary current of monotonous misery runs on smoothly without exciting our attention, and is regarded as mere matter of course. Of course it must be so. We are the fools of accident and position. A man may know that the blow which for him deprives happiness henceforward of any meaning, except as a synonym for indifference, is to others but one item in the long account of inevitable suffering. We should feel for others ; but, after all, we cannot actually feel other men's feelings.

The rapid diminution of sympathy as its object becomes remote is an essential part of our spiritual mechanism. Divines have often tried to stimulate their hearers by painting as vividly as they could the awful realities of eternal punishment. Susceptible imaginations have been driven to madness when for a brief period they could see the veil of this world drawn back and hell yawning beneath their feet. But the most eloquent preachers of such doctrine confess the difficulty of changing even a genuine belief into a realising apprehension of the unseen world. If the sight of hell would madden any finite intelligence, there is hell enough upon earth to fill our lunatic asylums. Could any telephone be contrived which should concentrate the multitudinous wail of agony that

rises unceasingly from every corner of the earth and pour it for one minute into our ears, we should pray for deafness as the only safeguard of sanity: the faculty of hearing would mean simply a capacity for enduring torture. To complain of our want of susceptibility would be to complain that we have skin to protect our bodies, and that the prick of a needle is not able to throw us into convulsions.

There are moments, however, at which we suddenly become abnormally sensitive. We catch the remote as well as the neighbouring noise; we hear the distant ocean rolling on the shore, and realise the truth that its volume of sound is intrinsically greater than that of the fountain which splashes in our gardens. We rise for an instant to a point of view where some of the illusions of perspective due to our individual position cease to perplex our judgment—only to fall into new illusions. The mind to which such a vision has been revealed sometimes brings back fragments of memory which may disturb its ordinary powers of judgment. It remembers the shuddering glance into some profound abyss of misery, and forgets the less impressive compensations. No wonder if a tender nature is apt to lose its balance after such an experience. The miseries of war are conspicuous: it passionately declares that all war is a simple unmixed evil, to be avoided at any cost, and refuses to believe that any call of honour or interest can justify a ruler in pronouncing upon his subjects the awful sentence which includes in itself every possible variety of human woe.

The statesman, the moralist, and the philosopher have, of course, an easy game in exposing the error of such impulsive utterances. War, says the economist, is an evil; but it is not a pure addition to the sum of evils. A hundred thousand men have been killed; but they "should have died hereafter." They have died in the prime of life, and many of them by a speedy death. They have at least been spared possibilities of far worse suffering, of years of slow torture, racking disease, and strength slowly beaten out of them by poverty and labour. They make room for a growing population; and we may take some comfort in the thought that they died like men, and put a creditable *finis* to the short story of life. The moralist adds that there are worse things than war; that cowardly submission to brute-strength and incapacity to accept the duties imposed upon us by our position in the world, are evils which eat out the heart of a race instead of cutting off a certain number of martyrs. And the philosopher points out that it is idle to denounce war without trying to extirpate the causes of war. Whilst men are men—and our wings have not yet shown symptoms of sprouting—we shall have at times to trust to steel and powder, and to appeal to sheer physical force in the last resort.

All this is true enough, or, rather, is a set of truisms. They are just worth recalling because they expose the fallacy which underlies so many of the quack remedies by which minds of the quick and sensitive order propose to cure the deeply-seated diseases of the race. We are too

often like children looking at some huge piece of machinery, and criticising one particular portion. That big chimney, we say, is hideous and offensive; it is always throwing out huge volumes of smoke, darkening the skies and spoiling the neighbouring gardens; it is ugly in shape; it offends our noses, and is a nuisance to everybody concerned. Let us take it down and go on without it. Perhaps we will, if you will show us how to consume our own smoke; but, unluckily, we cannot cut out bits of a machine, or of a living organism at random, merely because the function which they discharge is unpleasant. To suppress war means to supplant the military instinct—by something. We should undoubtedly gain incalculable advantages if we could gain, by calm reasoning, the results now obtained at the cannon's mouth. We should lose incalculably if we tried to suppress it by persuading all the good people in the world to submit to every wrong that is done by all the bad people. We will put down capital punishment, it is said, if the murderers will be kind enough to begin. The same principle applies to what is plausibly called murder on a large scale.

No one, in brief, who has the rudiments of natural affection, can deny that war is an appalling evil; nor can anyone who has a clear head deny that it is at times a necessary evil. We cannot approve of the extreme which is popular in a mess-room, nor the extreme which finds favour with Quaker tradesmen. Sympathy for human suffering condemns one view, and stern facts condemn the other. But it is impossible to get beyond this obvious commonplace. No downright test of easy application can ever be laid down for our guidance in so enormously complex a scheme of human affairs. We cannot say distinctly what rapidity of pulse, or what degree of temperature, justifies a resort to the surgeon's knife. The policy of nations depends upon considerations far more complex even than those which must regulate our dealing with the individual organism. After all is said and done, we can end only by recommending trust in Providence for the final issues, and, for the time, a decision by that rule of thumb, which too often comes to be a decision by the ancient method of heads and tails. It is in such cases a mere mockery to lay down a few positive precepts. We can, at most, try to clear away some of the rank growth of slipshod commonplace, which is apt to spread itself in parasitic fashion over the framework of rational discussion. One moment's contact with facts would disperse vast masses of that rhetorical fog which both sides find their account in propagating. Anyone, for example, who happened to be in Hyde Park on the occasion of a late popular meeting, must have brought away some food for meditation. The patriotic emotion of a vast multitude is an imposing spectacle in the mass; and perhaps it is really grand upon second or third thoughts. But when you are in a position to take it to bits, to weigh the value of each unit in the grand total, and to ask what any sum composed of such fragments can be really worth in the eye of reason, the first results are startling. Take one of those "first

and second citizens," to whom Shakspeare administers a bit of his mind through the mouths of Menenius and Coriolanus; give him the wondrous advantages of School-Board training; then take stock of his mental endowments, his acquired information, his capacity for carrying on long trains of reflection, and balancing opposing considerations. Think of the surroundings amidst which he has been brought up, of the occupations in which his whole energies have been absorbed, of the amusements which solace his leisure hours, and then ask what is the weight that should be fairly given to his opinion upon international politics. Our school-inspectors are fond of anecdotes showing that the ingenious children in a public school are frequently unable to say whether Paris or France is a capital city, or to distinguish clearly between the heroes of English and of ancient Jewish history. The lad has grown up and improved his mind by popular lectures, or by the talk and the literature which are suited to the atmosphere of a public-house. Is he likely to know much of the history of Europe in general; of the means by which the Russian and the Turkish power has been developed; of the probable designs of Prince Bismarck or M. Gambetta; or of the effect which would be produced upon Indian Mahomedans by an occupation of Constantinople? Does he know the difference between the Bosphorus and Dardanelles? or has he a distinct opinion as to whether the Danube flows into the Black or the Red Sea? Yet some approximation to settled views upon that geographical problem would surely be a first step towards forming a reasonable opinion as to the proper direction of English politics. But we know that, in point of fact, his mind is either a hopeless blank upon all such matters, or filled with such waifs and strays of knowledge as are drifted to and fro on the sea of popular literature. Upon questions of unions and strikes, upon the merits and demerits of local politicians, or even of national dignitaries, he may have the kind of opinion which can be formed by rough common sense, and which is sometimes entitled to considerable respect. But is it not pretty clear that his opinion upon the really vital questions of foreign politics is not in sober earnest an opinion at all; but such a vague guess as that of a schoolboy who dislikes the Romans because he has been worried by the Latin Grammar? It is not an opinion about the things themselves, which he has never seen, and is totally unable to imagine, but about certain arbitrary symbols which, at the very best, resemble them about as much as the map in *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* resembles the actual fields, rivers, hills, and cities of England.

Put together a hundred thousand of such people, and you have an imposing mass of public opinion which can materially influence votes and therefore determine peace or war. It is true that politicians prove to us that they can distil valuable products out of such crude masses of ignorant sentiment. Nor would I for a moment deny it. It is a hollow view which overlooks the value of popular instincts, even though they be blind. Patriotism undoubtedly is a noble emotion and indeed of vital

importance to a nation, even when existing in totally unreasonable minds. It cannot be too highly commended nor too assiduously fostered by all honourable means; for it is the spontaneous outgrowth of a social order in which the mass of the nation is contented, self-respecting, and full of confidence in its appointed leaders. But, undoubtedly, it may be allied with the most preposterous opinions. It may express the conviction of a Briton who has never been outside of Little Peddlington, that he is intrinsically superior to foreigners in general, whom he judges, by a hasty generalisation, to consist principally of men going about with monkeys and barrel-organs. The general formula of international prejudices seems to be "the Not-I must be worse than I"—which can hardly be regarded as a self-evident or universal first principle. In other words, the instinct, however noble, is apt to be, let us say, at least, purblind. It can vaguely recognise light and shade, but not discriminate form. It may dimly perceive that the motives suggested for its guidance are intrinsically mean and debasing or such as may be worthily set before a great nation. A cause which can conciliate the support of multitudes has perhaps the presumption in its favour that it must rest upon some broad, intelligible, and generous principle. Sheer unadulterated selfishness and cowardice does not supply the means of moving rhetoric.

Whatever the value of this guarantee—a question which must be left to political philosophers—we must admit that the mass which decides for war or peace is utterly incompetent to decide upon specific issues of fact. It requires, and when healthy admits that it requires, the guidance of higher and more trained intelligence. It is the blind force which propels the vessel to destruction or to safety according as the helmsman steers. What confidence, then, can be put in the helmsman? Putting aside for a moment our prepossessions as to particular cases, or assuming that we are solitary exceptions to the general rule, what influence has far-seeing statesmanship upon the issues of war and peace? Is it such as to induce the belief that war is anything but a random collision between rival masses impelled by a vague instinct of self-preservation and mutual antipathy?

The reasons for a sceptical view are obvious. There is the everlasting disagreement of the most accomplished doctors. At times we may find some shadow of agreement as to the past; as a man who has just walked over a precipice admits that his guide must have taken the wrong turn somewhere. But as to the future? Do not our experts contradict each other as flatly as scientific witnesses of a trial? The wisdom of statesmen may imply skill in manipulating the immediate turns and twists of the diplomatic game, but surely not authority in deciding upon the profounder issues of political development. Looking back on the tragi-comedy of history, it becomes a strange game of cross-purposes and hopeless misconceptions. The ends for which one generation fights to the death are valueless to its successor. A war is carried on for religion, and before it is well over the religious faith has ebbed; for empire, and

the nation is ruined by the excessive burden which it took for booty; for trade, and economists prove that the restrictions to be enforced are fatal to the intention of their advocates; to maintain a balance of power, which shifts under your feet by the slow growth of invisible processes, or to put down revolutionary ideas, which develop all the more rapidly by the very measures employed to check them. The ostensible object, which has absorbed all the thoughts of diplomatists and statesmen, turns out, when we look back from the vantage ground of later experience, to be entirely different from that at which the nation was unconsciously aiming. Endless discussions about treaties and delicate points of international law are but so much dust thrown in the eyes of the world to disguise the true working force—the ambition of rulers or the blind antipathy of rival peoples and systems of government.

We have grown wiser, it is said. Not a newspaper editor but has the whole scheme of modern politics at his finger's ends. Possibly, but yet reflect for one moment how far the shrewdest and loftiest intellects of former days have seen before them. Read the speeches and statepapers of men like Burke or Pitt, and see how far the most philosophic and vigorous of statesmen could really look into the future. What kind of map of Europe would our fathers have constructed for a period only fifty years removed from them? How many forces which have now become of primary importance could they have measured or even recognised as existing? The vast political, social, and religious movements which have altered the sympathies of mankind, the changed views of economical science, the enormous transformations of the whole social mechanism brought about by the discoveries of a few quiet inventors, to whom rulers listened with a pitying smile, or whom they snubbed by official contempt; the entrance upon the scene of entirely new populations, the opening of new questions, the radical changes in the relative power of different peoples—all these things were of necessity hidden from their gaze. Think of a time when America was little more than a petty colony, when steam was not, when trades-unions, and strikes, and all the social difficulties connected with them were still in embryo, when all religious zeal was represented by a few Methodists, when such a phrase as an oppressed nationality would have been barbarous and meaningless; and calculate what value could be attached to opinions formed when the phenomena suggested by such words were still in embryo. And surely we who are living in the midst of a chaotic struggle of innumerable social and religious forces, of which no man can fully describe the origin, and certainly no man can even affect to predict the final outcome, should be modest in our calculations. Who can say that some little germ of future changes is not at this moment before our eyes which may invert all the data upon which statesmen reckon before our children have grown into old age?

Such considerations show that statesmen not only live, but are bound by the strongest motives to live, in one sense, from hand to mouth. We

can see the immediate evils ; but we can look but a little way into the future. We are like a steamship running at full speed, through a fog, towards an unknown shore. A keen lookout will reveal the gleam of an iceberg, the approach of a rival threatening immediate collision, or some vague symptom of approaching storm. A firm hand and a quick eye are of paramount importance to meet each contingency as it arises ; but it is as great a fault to affect to see further than is really possible into the mysterious gloom of the future as to shut our eyes and trust to chance. Certain rules are clear and unalterable, but to trust to refined and elaborate calculations dependent upon assumptions which change at every moment under our eyes, is to take cobwebs for solid cordage. To resist oppression, to foster the spirit of a nation, and to cultivate by honest means the good-will of its neighbours, are obvious duties ; but the attainment of distant results must be left to a power greater than that of statesmen. What the statesman can and ought to do is to distinguish between the solid and the showy, between worthy and unworthy objects of national ambition, but not to attempt pursuits which are of necessity illusory.

Must war, then, be taken to mean a collision of rival forces, in which the true end is necessarily hidden from the immense majority of the actors, and but partially perceptible even to the most far-sighted ? Races, shall we say, are dashed against each other like wrecks in a whirlpool, without knowing why or divining the end ? All that can be known is that the weakest will probably go to the bottom. It is part of the all-pervading struggle for existence, which, as some men proclaim, is the one attainable law of the universe. Strength must be the sole virtue, and morality, as between nations, be a mere name. The question really asked and solved is not whether this or that interpretation of a treaty be right ; but whether this or that product of social development is on the whole the strongest. Nations with opposing interests will fight, sooner or later, as surely as two dogs who both want the same bone. The big dog will eat the little dog ; and we must rejoice that the breed of dogs will be improved by the result. And, indeed, that seems to be the legitimate result of some teaching, which declares that a people should never be guided by anything but an exclusive regard to their own interests. To talk of putting a stop to war must be an idle dream ; for, in one shape or another, the struggle is inevitable ; if a nation never fights, it will rot ; the palliatives and glosses by which we may conceal its nature are so much empty verbiage ; and perhaps the form of struggle which resorts to cannon and bayonet is the best, because it kills down the weak most rapidly and decisively.

Undoubtedly there is an admixture of truth in a view which appears at first sight to be simply depressing. In most of the hideous tugging and wrestling which has trampled down the weaker folk of the world, and with them trampled down many seeds of noble life which might have borne fruit, we are unable to trace much intelligible purpose.

Asiatics and Europeans, barbarians and Romans, Protestants and Catholics, Teutonic and Latin races have tugged each other up and down, committing every kind of atrocity, destroying flourishing civilisations, crushing out the germs of philosophy and religion, and making earth a pandemonium for generations. Faith in the higher destinies of our race must rest upon something more than a bare contemplation of this ceaseless and sickening struggle. Might is right, is the one moral suggested by a superficial glance at history. And yet, without entering upon ultimate grounds for the opinion, we will here assume that it is in some sense the result of reading backwards the true formula, Right is might. We must, indeed, add "in the long run," and sometimes in the very long run. Slowly and imperfectly, and through many defeats and disappointments, the higher order emerges, and a fuller day dawns upon the world. If we cannot recognise the process, it is because our vision is generally limited to an infinitesimal arc of the vast circle of human destiny. We are disappointed when the work of a thousand years is not crammed into a life-time. "The wheels of God grind slowly," as it is said, though "they grind exceedingly small."

The comfort, then, which we may take to ourselves in case of war is not of a kind to encourage a simple, sanguine optimism. Measured by the relation between the ends contemplated and the ends actually attained, it is generally a fresh illustration of the vanity of all human enterprise.

War is not a trial in which the right side is certain to win the verdict: the good cause, on the contrary, may be trampled down for generations and for centuries. Races have fallen back into barbarism, and philosophy has died down to the roots. We cannot even be certain, and we can hardly regard it as possible, that the true issue is perceptible to the parties themselves. Unless we are sure that we are indefinitely wiser than our ancestors, we must admit that war, if judged by the intention of the combatants, may be simply a gigantic blunder, when success would often defeat the most cherished purpose of the successful. The one theory which can be clearly put down as a certain advantage is, that war is a fiery ordeal which will search out the weak parts of the social system. Corruption, effeminacy, incompetence of rulers, want of confidence in the governed will be detected and meet with condign punishment. The remedy is tremendous, and may kill or cure. If we venture, in virtue of some higher faith, to rejoice in the application of the inexorable test, we should certainly rejoice with trembling.

It is in this light that we must consider the most popular apology for war. War, it is said, has at least the advantage that it makes men look beyond the counting-house. The "snub-nosed, smooth-faced rogue" is forced to make a weapon of his "cheating yardwand," or at least to put on a volunteer's uniform, and elevate his mere play by thoughts of its possible transformation into real deadly earnest. Some modern teachers, it is said, would estimate the cost of a national defeat by the precise sum which underwriters would have had to pay for test ironclads. In war,

these grovelling spirits, if not aroused to loftier thought, are at least thrust aside. A generous impulse of patriotism fires men's blood, and makes them see for once the beauty of self-sacrifice. The worship of the great god Dollar is not confined to America, and anything which makes men feel that he is not an omnipotent ruler, helps so far to raise them in the scale of existence.

Such a doctrine never wants eloquent advocates when there is a shadow of war. Sometimes, too, they may push it to extravagant results; but, on the whole, it perhaps requires rather to be supplemented than corrected. There is undoubtedly something elevating in any great impulse which welds men together for a time, and forces them to attend to the great currents of destiny by which they are generally borne along as unconscious atoms; only, it must be added, that those movements which stir a nation to its depths must stir the bad as well as the good impulses. War is a period during which passions are abnormally excited; it is a fever and a paroxysm; whether it does good or ill depends upon the general conditions of health, and the capacity for permanently assimilating the tremendous teaching of hard trials. There is always, one may say, a handwriting on the wall for those who can read it; but it is woven into the very tissue of the tapestry, not painted on the surface. In ordinary daylight it is obscured by a number of trifling inscriptions, scribbled over it by our commonplace interests. Under the stimulus of war we become sensitive to the existence of the underlying words; but, even then, a frivolous or selfish observer may hopelessly misinterpret their meaning, and his last state will be worse than his first.

Without metaphor, these exalted states of national consciousness imply, like all other conditions of human life, a strange mixture of good and evil, intertwined with such complexity that we can hardly rejoice or lament without instantly qualifying the statement. A war, we say, undertaken for a noble purpose, is so far good; it teaches men to look beyond their narrow aims, and to sink their private passions for a time in the broad stream of unselfish emotion. But it would be idle to deny that even the most honourable war attracts a vast mass of evil passion, and that some wars attract little else. Everywhere many men long for war, because they see a chance of filling their pockets, and many in order to gratify a blind unreasoning antipathy. A statesman's policy is often as base, though masked as patriotic, as that of the meanest grocer who ever put sand in his sugar or tricked a rival tradesman out of his custom. Perhaps highway robbery is a less degrading profession than pocket-picking, and the use of brute force does less to corrupt a nation than resort to simple fraud; still, a so-called patriotism, which is a mere cloak for selfish greed or brutal lust of power, is scarcely likely to elevate those who are carried away by the impulse. And yet we see again that even this correcting proposition requires much qualification. Does the proposed end, we may ask, make so much difference? It is only by a conventional

metaphor that we speak of a nation as if it had a single soul and were animated by one purpose. Private Smith knows little and thinks less of the end for which he fights; so far he is but a machine which will cut one set of throats as easily as another. His loyalty, therefore, is the same whether its object be a tyrant or a deliverer. A war carried on by rulers for the basest motives, may imply the noblest motives in their followers; genuine patriotism may be stimulated in the effort to crush the patriotic efforts of a rival. In every quarrel one side is on the right on a whole, and yet in every quarrel good and bad passions are enlisted on both sides. Whether Turkish or Russian in our sympathies, we may hope that the heroism which defended Plevna will not be utterly wasted, any more than the heroism which crossed the Balkans; somewhere or other, by some process which eludes our scrutiny, it may be carried to the credit of our race. The simple peasant who was taken from his fields to fight for Czar or for Sultan was not surely responsible for the madness of his superiors, though at the moment he dearly has to pay for it. Heroism, even when cruelly wasted, may gain some end not contemplated by those who determine its direction. Indeed, one is sometimes tempted to believe in the apparent paradox that the greatest waste is often the greatest gain. Victory is constantly far worse in its results than defeat. Prussia, as some people maintain, was in the end the chief gainer by the successes of Napoleon; and France, it is said, has learnt more than Germany from the disasters of 1870. Looking back upon history, marking how nations rise and fall, how the prestige won by a victorious war seems to lead to stagnation, and how a crushing defeat stimulates the energy of a people and forces it into thoroughgoing reforms, we may sometimes doubt whether a true patriot should not in his secret soul sometimes prefer misfortune to glory; at least, we cannot deny that there is a corrupting side to military success. Englishmen boast of never boasting, and their brag differs in kind, if not in degree, from that of less favoured races. And yet, who has not blushed at the sight of John Bull swelling and strutting and driving out in his national four-in-hand to the field of Waterloo, or shrunk with inexpressible disgust from some of those utterances of pure unadulterated vulgarity which express the patriotism of the music-halls? Yet again we need not deny that true courage may be compatible with modes of speech which set on edge the teeth of every rational being. And happily, the resolute and silent acceptance of high duties which becomes the phlegmatic Briton is commoner than it seems, partly because it scorns such empty manifestations. No proposition can be laid down upon the subject which does not immediately suggest an antithetic proposition equally plausible.

We must leave it to schoolboys, then, to maintain the thesis that war is good or bad in itself, and to the omniscient philosophers of the future to define the conditions under which this tremendous fermentation generated in a nation is likely to be healthy or morbid. For the great majority of us, who have no special enlightenment, it is only possible—

when war is threatened—to fall back upon certain ancient maxims conserved by high authority, but for that reason savouring a little of the copy-book. We have to do our duty in the dark. War, we can only say, means the process by which nations are pressed through a tremendous crucible. Empty exultation is for the frivolous, and mere shrieking for cowards. If victory must always be doubtful, so must the benefit of victory; if we fail to gain our ostensible purpose, that purpose is often the embodiment of mistaken aspirations; if patriotism is stimulated, so are the baser passions which manage to pass themselves off as patriotic. The one good omen is not simply the fighting for our country, but fighting in a worthy spirit. A nation which fights when the only alternative to fighting is base and cowardly concession; which fights in no spirit of empty vapouring, but with the solemn and resolute sense befitting a tremendous ordeal; which is resolved to look facts in the face; to be made more courageous by defeat, and more serious by success; and to be content with no superficial remedy to the evils brought out in the process,—may expect that even the horrors of war will have their compensating advantages. Certainly, the benefits may come in the guise of disaster, and the momentary exultation and depression may be equally condemned by longer experience; but it is not in this world that we must expect to find good and evil standing over against each other in clear relief, and marked by unmistakable characteristics. Whilst they are blended so intimately as to defy all analysis, it is idle to expect a neat and intelligible distribution of rewards and penalties to men and nations. We must do our duty with such silent courage as we can command, and remember that results are not in our hands.

"For Percival."

CHAPTER XXVI

OF CONFESSION.



IT is not pleasant to own to faults or follies, even though there may be a certainty of relief when the ordeal is over. Of course some confessions are worse to make than others. I suppose the difficulty ought

to be exactly measured by the amount of guilt, or foolishness, but I do not at all think it is. A Greek brigand would probably own to an additional murder or two more easily than a pattern Sunday scholar, in his first place, would confess that he had been overcome by the loose change in his master's till. Nor does it depend on the kindness of our listener. Sternness may give us a defiant strength; gentleness may add a keener sting to our pain. I incline to think that the real question is—Will he be surprised?

Confession is intolerable unless it is met half way. Better be understood at once, even if you are overwhelmed with reproaches, than have laboriously to draw down the storm by explanations. One may give one pull to a shower-bath string in December—but to have to take pains to get it to work properly! And, let the hearer be as kind as he will, sympathy is impossible till surprise is overcome; the one must subside before the other can flow. Now sympathy should answer to the appeal, as the note answers to the finger of the musician; if delayed, it jars.

Therefore, if you have acquired a character for headlong impetuosity, you may go with a light heart (comparatively speaking), and own to some thoughtless action, from whose consequences you want to be delivered. It will be unpleasant, but not half so unpleasant as if you had to explain that you had missed your life's golden opportunity through a suspicious timidity.



"I KNOW I PROMISED, BUT YOU WILL SET ME FREE."



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Now Percival had to make a confession which would cause the greatest surprise among his friends. It was not a crime, it was only an imprudence. But at Brackenhill the words Percival and prudence were supposed to be synonymous. He might well have that apprehensive line between his brows. Hitherto the hermit crab had shown his claws in a lofty and defiant manner, and had been considered rather a formidable animal than otherwise. But he felt very helpless and miserable as he dragged himself to Brackenhill to own that he had lost his shell.

The old butler received him very graciously, and told the footman to take out Mr. Percival's portmanteau.

"I haven't any luggage," said Percival with a smile. (It seemed to him that it was a very sickly smile, and he resolved to try and do better the next time there should be any occasion for one. But really, he reflected, smiling was very difficult.) "Are they all at home?" he inquired. Duncan explained that there was no one at home except the Squire. Mrs. Thorne had gone up to town for the day, and would not return till late, perhaps not till the next morning. Mr. Horace had gone to Mr. Garnett's to dine and sleep, and Mrs. Middleton and Miss Langton dined early, and had ordered the pony-chaise, saying that they should call on Miss Falconer, but would be back in the evening.

"It's all right," said Percival. "It is my grandfather I want to see. Is he in the library? I'll go." He took a step and then hesitated. "No, tell him I am here."

He turned into the drawing-room, and stood on the hearthrug. He drew himself up to his full height, and held his head all the more proudly that he should have to bend it soon. He gazed almost wrathfully at the portraits on the walls, at the quaint old-fashioned furniture, at the treasures of old china—things comparatively worthless to untaught eyes, but speaking plainly to him of the patient accumulation of many years. Because he prized them they irritated him. How many generations of Thornes had lived at Brackenhill in a sort of stewardship, guarding these things, adding to them, and bequeathing them to their successors! There had been Thornes who were wasteful, and encumbered the estate with mortgages, but somehow they had struggled on. Nothing had ever been sold. Percival was angry, because he understood the delicate charm of all around him. He could scorn vulgar splendour, but not these possessions, which were honourable in his eyes, like an old name. "How was I ever to be independent?" he said to himself. "Why wasn't I taught to laugh at it all, and shipped off to keep sheep in Australia, like that Wingfield boy who used to play with Lottie Blake? He likes it well enough, I'll be bound; and he'll fall on his feet anywhere, while I—" And the tall young fellow, with his proud face and stately air, looked down at his hands, and could almost have groaned. He knew very well what beautiful hands they were—smooth, olive-skinned, and useless.

His grandfather came up the room with a quick, nervous step, and an expression of unmistakable anxiety in his eyes. What did this sudden visit mean? For a moment he scanned his favourite as if he feared some accident might have happened, and Percival might have arrived, like a Chelsea pensioner, with much glory and a scarcity of limbs. But there was no sign of any such calamity, as the young man advanced a step or two to meet him; and when the Squire saw his defiant manner, and met his glance, he said to himself that somehow he had offended Percival. It was a relief to him that his grandson shook hands with him. Just for that moment more the hermit crab looked very formidable indeed.

"Sissy is out," said the old man. "If she had known——"

"Perhaps it's just as well," Percival replied. "I wanted to speak to you, if you are not busy."

The other shook his head. "No—what is it?"

"Have you looked at the paper this morning?"

Now the Squire had been reading the *Times* in the library before luncheon, and had been very much astonished at the Lisle catastrophe. He had said to his sister, "Just look there! *That* is the man Alfred trusted, when he wouldn't trust his own father! Left Percival in *his* charge; I wasn't fit to take care of the boy—oh, no! A pretty sort of guardian, eh? If this had happened three or four years earlier, where would that money be?" But Percival's arrival had so alarmed him, that the whole thing had gone out of his head.

"Yes—why, yes," he said. He began to wonder how Percival could have got into the paper, and how he could have missed the paragraph. The wildest ideas went hurrying through his brain. The boy couldn't have gone and married someone within three weeks of the wedding-day! It was a comfort that there was no lady visible. Or accidentally made an end of someone? "I looked at the paper—yes, certainly," said the Squire, trembling with anxiety.

"Did you see anything about Mr. Lisle?" Percival demanded.

"Lisle! Oh, yes, of course. What an abominable affair; and what a consummate rascal the fellow must be!" He pulled up suddenly. It was possible that Percival might have something to say in defence of his father's friend; but the young man made no sign. "Why, as I was saying to your Aunt Harriet, if this smash had come three or four years earlier, he might have ruined you."

"He has."

"Eh?" said the Squire, blankly.

"He has."

Percival saw the truth, which he had delivered like a violent thrust, slowly making its way through the barriers of preconceived ideas. He saw the faint gleam of triumph dawning in the old man's eyes—of triumph and pleasure that could not be altogether disguised. For a moment he almost hated his grandfather.

"Ruined you—he *has* ruined you! Percival, do you really mean it!"

Percival bent his head.

"And you were always so wise in money matters!" said the Squire, with a kindly smile of amusement. "What—did he swindle you too? Told you of some very special investment, eh? How much per cent. were you to have, Percival?"

"I wasn't worth so much trouble. He had nothing to do. Only we never had a settlement when I came of age."

"Never settled matters then! How on earth did that happen?"

"I should advise you to adopt the theory that I was a fool," said Percival bitterly. "It will work very well."

The old man was not offended at the young fellow's sullen manner. It would have been difficult for Percival to have offended him. He was ready to be a partisan, had it been a case of murder, or marriage, as in his first wild fancy.

"Ah, well—what does it matter?" he said, rubbing his hands, and looking eagerly up at the other's face. "If that old swindler had done no more harm to anyone than he has done to you, one might forgive him."

"He has taken all I had," was Percival's dull reply.

"Hardly. For he hasn't taken all *I* have. Come, my boy, there's nothing to look so grave about. What was it?—But never mind."

Godfrey Thorne's eyes were glistening with gratification. Seven-and-twenty years earlier his son Alfred had defied him, and defied him successfully. He had inflicted the heaviest punishment in his power, he had lavished his deepest tenderness; but Alfred first, and then Percival, had held aloof, giving him to understand that they did not fear his anger, and did not stand in need of his kindness. He had felt that he was beaten, though he could not bear to acknowledge it. And now all at once came his moment of triumph; his boy was there to seek his help; he was head of his house once more.

"No matter," he said. "While I live you will hardly want, I think; and when I die you will have Brackenhill."

Percival looked him full in the face in grave surprise.

"Perhaps you will get to like the old place," his grandfather went on. "I think you will, if you give it a fair trial. There have been Thornes here a long while. Sissy likes it very much—ask her. Of course I don't want to bind you in any way, but it is a good house, you know. If you gave it a fair trial——"

"What are you talking about?" said Percival.

"I say that when I die you will have Brackenhill."

"And I say No."

The other's face fell. "You mustn't cross me in this," he said. Was it possible that even now the cup should be dashed from his lips?

"What do you mean? You are the eldest—you are the heir."

"Horace is your heir," said Percival. "If he had done anything to forfeit his position, it would be another thing. But he has been brought

up, from the first, in the belief that he was to succeed you, and it would be the height of injustice to make any change now."

"And how about the injustice to your father and yourself?"

Percival's head went up. "We accepted your terms. I see no injustice there."

"But surely you will not deny my right to do what I will with my own. Do you mean——"

"Of course you *can* do what you like with it," said the young man.

"If you choose to rob Horace, I can't prevent it. But I needn't be a party to the robbery." Thus the hermit crab showed his claws.

"And if it were that or nothing? No! Percival, no! I was only joking." For a sudden fire had flashed in Percival's dark eyes. "You are judging me hastily too. How do you know Horace has not done anything to justify this?"

"Simply because he told me he had not. He said that you had exacted a promise from him, and that he had kept it, and would keep it."

"Did he tell you what that promise was?"

"No."

"Shall I?"

"As you please."

"You must not trust Horace," said Thorne deliberately.

"I would stake my life on his truth," was the hot reply.

"So would I have done—once—and lost it. The promise he made in the morning was broken before night. But he has never owned it."

"There must be some mistake—I can't believe it," said Percival.

The old man shook his head. "I have proof enough, if proof were needed. It was last summer when you were both here——"

"At the Agricultural Show?"

"Yes. If you want to be very exact, it was the second day of the show. I had heard some talk the day before about Horace and Miss Adelaide Blake, and it didn't please me—an underhand flirtation with one of that man's daughters, and that vulgar gossip, Lydia Rawlinson, to tell me of it, giggling all the time to think how nicely I had been kept in the dark!"

"You didn't prefer her word to Horace's, I hope?"

"No. I spoke to Horace and told him that I didn't care about old Blake and his British Flour, and I didn't choose that he should have anything to do with Miss Adelaide. And he said there was nothing in it at all, and that, though he liked her very well, he didn't care if he never saw her again." Percival's eyes were lighted with eager attention. "He would make me any promise I liked, but he assured me none was needed, and he half laughed as he said it, as if the idea were absurd. And he finished by inquiring whether he might bow if he met her, as he would rather not be rude."

"And you told him——"

"That I didn't mean he should do anything ungentlemanly, of course,

but anything more than the merest politeness would be at his peril, for, if I detected anything underhand, I had done with him for ever. And he stood up before me, as boldly as you are standing now, still with that sort of half smile, as if I were the most unreasonable old fellow on the face of the earth ever to have had such a suspicion, and said, 'On my honour, sir, Addie Blake is nothing to me, and never will be.' 'Very good,' I said, 'you are warned, and you may go.' And, between nine and ten that very night, my gentleman was walking with her in Langley Wood!"

"Ah!" said Percival, looking down.

"I never told him I knew it," said the squire. "What's the good? For Harriet's sake too—there's no knowing what may happen, and why should she be tormented? But that was an end of everything. I'm not going to quarrel about it. He thinks he has cheated me—let him. Perhaps when I die he'll find out he hasn't—that's all. Only since that time, I've watched a little. What sort of hand does Miss Addie write?"

"Big—black," said Percival.

"Ah! Mrs. James dropped a letter out of one of hers, and looked at me to see if I had noticed it. That woman would do magnificently for a stage conspirator. Well, Percival, do you understand now why I don't think much of Horace?"

"Perfectly."

"You are satisfied?"

"The story is most convincing," said the young man. "Only there is a flaw in it. It happens that on that particular evening I had the honour of being Miss Blake's escort through Langley Wood."

He let the words drop leisurely, as one who expected to produce an impression. He produced none. The Squire smiled.

"Not that evening, I think; another perhaps. Miss Blake had a taste for moonlight walks I see, but on that particular evening I know who was her companion."

"Silas Fielding was mistaken," said Percival.

The old man started. "Silas Fielding! Oh, you have heard, then! Did Horace——"

"Why, I was there. He mistook us in the moonlight."

"No—no, it is impossible. No one could mistake you—you are not a bit alike. I don't know why you want to screen Horace."

Percival produced a bunch of keys from his pocket, and singled out a small one. "Not a bit alike?" he said.

"Think of Horace, and look in the glass," was the answer.

He unlocked a desk on a side table, and came back with a *carte de visite* in his hand. "Whose photograph is that?" he asked.

Mr. Thorne had half forgotten Tom Felton's attempt and its result, but he did recollect that there was something curious about a photograph of one of the boys. Apparently this was Percival, so he concluded that a trap was laid for him, and that it was really Horace. But his per-

plexity was not diminished. If he said "Horace's," it could not be denied that there was a strong likeness between the photograph and the man who stood before him. If he said "Yours," he might be told he was mistaken. He said, "I don't know."

"Well," said Percival, "we must be rather alike if you can't tell which sat for that. And we are. The colouring is altogether different, but the outline is very nearly the same, and a year ago the resemblance was much greater. I have reasons for remembering that evening, and I do remember it. I went with Miss Blake on an errand of which she had no need to be ashamed—but the reverse. Silas Fielding came upon us suddenly in the wood, and was startled. He knew Miss Blake by sight, and of course he had heard the Fordborough gossip, so seeing her he expected to see Horace. And as I stood there, just the same height and general appearance, and, very likely, with that felt hat I wore slouched rather over my face, of course in the dusk he *did* see Horace. It is all clear enough."

"It was dusk," said the Squire. "That was between half-past nine and ten?"

"Yes. A good deal nearer ten than half-past nine."

"And at a quarter past ten you had come in from the garden to get a shawl for Sissy, and didn't know where Horace was. I noted the time next day when Fielding was talking, because I remembered that Horace was certainly out then. I congratulate you on your walking powers, Percival."

"I didn't walk. I got a lift."

"Ah—who gave you a lift?"

"A young fellow—I don't know his name."

The Squire could not repress a smile. "No, no, Percival—this is Quixotic—why should you screen Horace? I tell you I know all about it. Silas Fielding was not my only informant."

"He was an artist, up at old Collins's farm," said the young man, pursuing his own train of thought. "But what does it signify? If you have any doubt still—ask Sissy. I think she would be sure to remember; at any rate I could bring back the evening to her mind."

"Ah yes—and Sissy's testimony would settle it."

"Of course," said Percival. "She could say with which of us she spent the evening in the garden. The whole thing is absurd, because I know perfectly well how it all happened. But you have misjudged Horace cruelly. Sissy shall bear witness, and set everything straight."

"So be it," was the quick rejoinder. "You accept Sissy's testimony! She has given it already. She says that you were with her during the whole of that evening, but that she does not know what became of Horace for the greater part of the time."

"Sissy never said that!"

"She did. She told me so when I went to her, directly after Silas Fielding left me."

"She didn't understand what you asked her. It isn't possible."

"It isn't possible that she misunderstood me. I told her that I had heard that Horace was out the evening before, that I didn't want any fuss made about it, but that I must get to the bottom of the matter, for if it were true that he had been in Langley Wood with Adelaide Blake, he would never be master here, and he knew it."

"What did she say then?"

"She was agitated at first, but she persisted that you had been in the garden all the evening, she could not answer for Horace. Percival, you *must* be mistaken about that particular day. You said you would take her word."

"Did I?" said young Thorne, "Then I will."

"That's right," the Squire began with an air of relief. But his grandson went on.

"I will take her word, but it must be from her own lips. If you will bring her, and she will repeat it—here—to my face. If you choose to bring her here——"

Godfrey Thorne understood it all, and knew that those eager trembling assurances that Percival had been in the garden all the evening, would never be repeated to Percival's face.

"No, there is no need," he said, after a moment's pause, during which he reflected that Brackenhill must surely come to his boy some day. "There has been a mistake, I suppose, and there is nothing more to be said. I'll take your word for it. We will say no more about it, will we? We'll let the matter rest, eh? What do you say?"

Percival stood, with lips compressed, as if he had not heard.

Mr. Thorne would willingly have been deceived to the day of his death. He was not inclined to be hard on Sissy's treachery, for several reasons. First of all, she was Sissy, and, though second to Percival, second to him alone. And then his mind refused to grasp the fact that all his suspicions of Horace were built on the statement concerning that evening, which Percival had just swept away. The year's suspicion stood, though its cause was gone. Our beliefs are not like our houses; they do not necessarily tumble about our ears because their foundations fail, or, at any rate, they are a great deal longer about it. If Horace had not been in the wood that particular night, he had been playing an underhand game somehow. Falsehood concerning that one interview would really have been nearer justice as a whole, than that little isolated truth. The old man did not put this into so many words, but he felt it. And Sissy had been working with him, working for Percival, working in the good cause. One does not desert one's accomplices. And, finally, it was a girl's falsehood, and the old Squire was disposed to be lenient to women in many ways. He had no doubt as to their inferiority, and judged them by a different standard. For instance, men told lies, women told—fibs. If a man told a lie, well, you knew what to think of him. But, if a woman told a fib, you shrugged your shoulders,

laughed perhaps, especially if she had got the better of someone you disliked, scolded her perhaps, but thought very little more of it. It might be that he felt that a woman had a truthfulness of her own which her white lies did not affect. Women are often referred to that indirect influence which they are supposed to exercise over things in general, and which they are assured is a sufficient right. Perhaps it was only just and logical in Godfrey Thorne, holding this idea, to wink at their attaining the indirect influence by slightly indirect means.

But how about his grandson, who held that women should maintain a pure and tender ideal, to which men, amid the rough scramble of their daily life, might turn for gentle thoughts, and sweet reverence, patient endurance, and unconquerable truth? The Squire was not quick to decipher such a creed, but some outline of it was written very plainly on Percival's face, in the features sternly set as if they were cast in bronze, and the eyes filled with surprise and indignation.

"We seem all to have been making mistakes, don't we?" said Godfrey Thorne. "Silas Fielding and Sissy and I—and you with old Lisle, eh? Suppose we let bygones be bygones, and start fresh and think no more of them?"

"We will talk of something else this moment, if you like," said Percival. "With all my heart."

"And you won't be hard on Sissy?" the old man persisted. "Percival, don't look so stern, you will terrify the poor child. I must have your word—you will be gentle with her?"

"I hope I shall not be unjustly hard on Sissy, or anyone."

"Remember how delicate and easily frightened she is. Percival, don't be too angry about a mistake. We all——"

"I think," young Thorne interrupted him, "that the less you and I say about this mistake of Sissy's the better."

But the Squire, who felt that he had unconsciously betrayed her, could not control his anxiety. "Remember," he said, "it was for you."

There was a shadow on the young man's face. "I do remember. But don't let us talk of this. Things are easily said, but no power on earth can unsay them." And with a quick movement of his hand, as if enforcing the silence for which he asked, he turned and went to the window.

He stood looking out on the terrace, trying to think, and failing signally. He was conscious only of a vague feeling of anger and helplessness, as if the earth were cracking and failing under his feet. He dared not speak, lest some one of the impulses which contended within him should get the upper hand, and pledge him to something definite. He had gone on his way so proudly and independently, as he thought, and all the while he had been a mere puppet in others' hands. Sissy had been scheming to enrich him, and Mr. Lisle had smilingly robbed him. But the fraud which seemed so all important that morning, as he journeyed to Brackenhill, was dwarfed by the treachery nearer home.

"Percival, I've acted very wrongly towards you," said the Squire from his easy-chair.

Young Thorne turned round with a reluctant air. Could it be that some fresh revelation awaited him?

"Seventy-seven. I may die any day," said the Squire.

"So may I," said Percival.

"Ah, but you may live fifty years." Percival shrugged his shoulders and hardly seemed enchanted at the prospect of the half-century. "But my time must be short, and I have risked your future. It seems to me now that I must have been mad."

"Do you mean you haven't made a will?"

"Yes, I made one. I suppose you would be all right if I hadn't. But Hardwicke has it. It was five or six years ago, when I had never seen you, Percival. Since then I have been planning how to set the old injustice right, and putting it off, from day to day, and year to year, because no half measures would content me. Now, I have written to Hardwicke; he is coming over next week, when these people are gone. I meant to settle everything before your marriage. I ought not to have put it off an hour. Seventy-seven—it is madness. You must not think I did not care about you; but I wanted to be just to Horace. He had claims, and I hesitated about leaving Brackenhill away from him without a cause. And of late, when I thought he had forfeited them, he was so ill, it seemed——. But what's the good of talking; there's no excuse possible for putting things off at seventy-seven!"

"I had no right to expect anything, sir."

"No—don't say that; it cuts me to the heart. After all, I could make it safe for you at five minutes' warning."

"It must be a short will," smiled the other.

The Squire got up. "Come and see," he said.

Percival followed him to his library, and stood by while he found his keys, and laid a document out on the table. The young man stooped, and read. Horace had a mere pittance, Mrs. Middleton a life-interest in a sufficient sum, Sissy a part of the family jewels; one or two trifling legacies were left to old friends. He lifted his head when he came to the end; it needed but three signatures to make him the future owner of Brackenhill—less than five minutes, as his grandfather had said.

"Mitchell of Stoneham made that, after the Langley Wood affair," said the Squire. "One day, when I was out of temper with Hardwicke, I went and gave the directions. But I cooled down; and then I didn't like the idea of righting you in an underhand way, as if I were ashamed of it, and I vowed that old Hardwicke should make the will, as he had made the others. It was natural Hardwicke should stand up for Horace," said the old man, apologetically; "he has known him all his life. So I told Mitchell to let me have it, and I'd think it over."

"I am glad," said Percival.

"But now I'll tell you what we'll do," Godfrey Thorne went on.

"If you'll ring the bell, I'll sign this, and Duncan and one of the men shall witness it. Then I shall feel happy about to-day, and to-morrow I'll go over to Hardwicke."

"Go to Hardwicke to-morrow by all means, but you mustn't sign this; there's no need. I think"—he smiled—"we may wait one day more."

"No; don't let us have any more waiting." The eager Squire had the pen in his hand.

But, "No!" said Percival. "What are you afraid of, sir? Of some accident between this and to-morrow? Well, if there were one, God forbid that you should leave this will behind you. How could Horace accept his rights as a gift from me? What could I say for myself if they taxed me with sneaking down here, while they were away, to induce you to sign a will which we both knew was a cruel injustice? After what has been said between us to-day, I should deserve to be scouted. I would sooner break stones on the road than take a penny left me by that will!"

"Perhaps you are right," said the Squire; and he slipped the blotting-paper, with careful carelessness, over the offending document. Percival saw, and smiled.

"But, after all," said the old man, "what am I to do? What am I to say to Hardwicke?"

"Isn't that for you to decide? Only be just to Horace."

"But for yourself—say what you would like. What would you take without all these scruples? Ah, you have a wish—I see it in your eyes. What is it?"

(It was the true Sultan fashion—Ask, and I will give it thee, even unto the half of my kingdom.)

"Well, I *have* a fancy," Percival owned. "But perhaps you only mean an income, or a lump sum. You would not like to divide the property, even if it were but a small part? The Thornes never have, I suppose."

Godfrey Thorne, who would have scoffed at the mere idea of such a thing ten years earlier, caught at it now. "Haven't they? Perhaps not. So much the better. I'll be the one to begin."

"Then," said Percival, "give me Prior's Hurst."

It was a small place—half farm, half manor-house—about fifteen miles away, on the edge of the little wood from which it took its name. "Give me Prior's Hurst, and a moderate income—nothing that will burden the estate—and I shall be content."

"It is an out-of-the-way place," said his grandfather.

"How long have the Thornes had it?"

"Almost ever since the Reformation. We bought it of the man who got it then."

"So I thought. And Brackenhill?"

"Oh, not till much later."

"Exactly," said Percival. "There were Thornes at Prior's Hurst before there were Thornes at Brackenhill. Why shouldn't there be Thornes at Prior's Hurst again? Since I am the elder, give me that."

"And I will," said the Squire, rubbing his hands, and looking up with a proud air of possession at his tall grandson. The solution of the problem pleased him. He was glad to do for his favourite what no Thorne had ever done, but there was something of unreality about the transaction; for a little while, and the whole would surely be Percival's.

The young man did not feel this so strongly. Hammond's chance remark, "Probably you think him in greater danger than he really is," had driven him to the opposite extreme. James Thorne had gone abroad for his health, had come home, had married, had lived some time; why not Horace? He would be careful; he could have everything that money could buy. He would never be strong, but "God grant he may live many years!" said the next heir. Percival's renunciation of Brackenhill that day was real.

"I think I'll go and have a look at the garden," he said. "But, first, I have a favour to ask."

"Ask it," said the Squire.

"Will you let me burn that unsigned will?"

"Why? It does no harm."

"Suppose it gets mislaid among your papers, and Horace should find it, how uselessly it would pain him!"

"That's true. Well, I'll look it up; I don't see it just this minute. I'll burn it to-day or to-morrow, you may trust me."

"I don't suppose you *do* see it," said Percival, "as it is under the blotting-paper, which is under your elbow. Let me burn it now; it can be no good. Signed, I could not take what it gives me; and, unsigned——"

"Take it then," said Thorne, shrugging his shoulders. "You'll lead me a life if you are always as obstinate as to-day."

Percival swept away the summer finery of the grate, and laid the paper down. His grandfather watched him in silence, pushing out his lower lip, as he found a match, and knelt on the rug to light it. There was a quick rush of flame as it touched Mr. Mitchell's work, and the leaves, which might have meant so much, curled and shrivelled into useless tinder. The wavering firelight shone strangely, for a moment, on the young man's face in the golden afternoon. There was something awful and irrevocable about the deed, now that it was done. *What* was it that had suddenly flared into nothingness with that hot breath on his cheek? He got up with a little flush on his face, and his eyes and lips were grave, as if he had been offering a sacrifice. His grandfather smiled.

"So much for a Quixotic piece of folly."

"Folly? I don't see it," said Percival. There was a crisp rustling in the ashes at his feet.

"But I do. And I ought to know what folly is at seventy-seven. I've seen enough. Well, you are a good fellow, and your folly is better than most folk's wisdom."

The last spark died in that little black heap. Percival, who had been gazing at it, looked up. "I didn't know you were an admirer of folly," he said. "I often am."

"Very good. Only if you are going out, don't carry your folly so far as to forget your dinner. Duncan said you were not going to stop."

"No. I shall go back to town to-night."

"I ordered dinner at half-past five, that will give you time. And now I am going to write to Hardwicke; so good-bye for the present, Mr. Thorne of Prior's Hurst." Percival had his hand on the door, when the old man called anxiously after him, "I don't know when Sissy comes back; but, if you meet her, you will remember——"

Percival interrupted him—"I cannot forget."

CHAPTER XXVII.

SISSY ENTERS INTO KING AGAC'S FEELINGS.

PERCIVAL passed out into the garden, thankful to be alone. He crossed the terrace and went down the stone steps—the terrace reminded him too forcibly of Sissy—and, plunging into the shrubbery, walked to and fro, with his head bent, and his hands behind his back. Gradually, and without conscious thought, there came into his soul, not clearness, but a better understanding of his perplexity.

He hated scenes, recriminations, quarrels. His indolence made him gentle in his manners as a rule. Having always been strong and well, he had nothing of that irritability which is more bad health than bad temper. Consequently he wondered that he should ever be warned to be lenient in his dealings with anyone, and imagined himself very tolerant and merciful indeed. He had no idea how stern he could look, nor how obvious it often was that he *chose* to yield. His grandfather's entreaty that he would be merciful to Sissy had awakened in his mind the remembrance of Aunt Harriet's exclamation when she heard of his engagement, "You won't be hard on her, will you?" He had resented that, as he had resented the pleading of this afternoon. But, as he walked under the freshness of the green boughs, he began to understand it, for it seemed to him that he *was* hard. He could say much for Sissy in justification and extenuation, he could have pleaded her cause with abundance of words, he fancied he could have touched others, and yet he could not touch himself. It was like digging through a shallow soil, and striking a layer of adamant. Let him say what he would, it always ended in an eternal protest—it was a lie, and therefore to be utterly abhorred.

There were many things he could have pardoned, and his pardon would have been calmly accorded and complete. A wrong done to himself, for instance. But how was any man to pardon a wrong done to Truth? Would he not be in some sort a sharer in the falsehood which he affected to forgive?

He hoped he was not unjust to Sissy. He would have believed she might be weak, and he counted it his right to guard and care for her, but he had never doubted her utter rectitude. And there was something monstrous to him in the idea that she should have deliberately wronged Horace—Horace her boy playfellow and protector—Horace who had printed little letters to her before she could read ordinary writing—Horace who had had her childish love, and baby kisses, years before he—Percival—ever set foot in Brackenhill. And had that been all! But she had been willing to share the spoil. He could not be unjust enough to imagine for a moment that Sissy had calculated on her own advantage in this, but such advantage should have been unendurable to her.

No, he could not forgive. And yet—poor Sissy

It would appear that Balak, the son of Zippor, had great faith in a change of place, when he sought to transform a blessing into a curse. Percival did not think much of the Biblical precedent, and did not desire the same result, but he tried the experiment. He glanced at his watch, found that he had half an hour to spare, and went to that lonely garden walk, where, six months before, he had asked Sissy to be his wife. Even to that melancholy corner the glory of summer had come, had flooded it, and filled it with sunlight, and verdure, and perfume. The very moss on the pathway which had been a blackish crust shone now like greenest velvet touched with gold. The blossom's loveliness was gone, but the green of the leaf was delicately fresh. The birds were singing on the boughs, and there lingered in the cool shadows a few late flowers of narcissus solitary on their stalk, and shining like sweet white stars in the dusky gloom.

Alone he stood, where they had stood together, and it is not to be denied that the locality had a certain effect. She rose up more clearly before him, in her delicate and gracious loveliness—little Sissy who had stood there, with wistful eyes uplifted to his face. He seemed to feel her soft hands on his arm, or about his neck, and a thrill ran through him at the fancy, as a thrill had run through him at the veritable touch. But, even as he softened, his lip curled in sorrowful disgust at his own weakness. Was he to yield something of his truth to the mere charm of Sissy's presence?

After all, what was the use of his deliberations? Their two lives were to be spent together, for if the falsehood repelled, it also bound him, since it was for him it was uttered. He would not profit by it, but he could not punish it. He had resigned his wider visions for a sweet home life with Sissy, and now the delicate bloom had been brushed off his love, and he must resign that, in its turn, for something lower. He would

Speak to her, since he could not pass it over in silence, but he would speak gravely and gently, and with perfect self-restraint. And perhaps in years to come at Prior's Hurst, truthfulness and trust might spring up and grow anew between them. It could not be as if wrong-doing had never been, but a new faith might arise on the ruins of the old.

He would be gentle. The hardness that was in him came out in the sternly accented determination of this resolve. Nothing should induce him to bandy reproaches with the girl who had fallen from truth in her desire to serve him. By his own deed he had made her his. He would not pass over what she had done, he would not deny his own ideal, far off and perfect as a star. But no words of hers should wring an angry word from him, he swore it to the blue sky, as he stood on the very spot of ground where he had taken her to his heart. "You won't be hard on her?" No—he would not be hard.

But Percival did not consider that there are two kinds of anger which are terrible. People may be out of temper, sullen, or stammering, with swollen veins—unreasoning, unjust. These one may fear while the fit lasts, or one may feel pity or disgust, but they are the lower in our eyes for their rage. But when a man neither masters nor is mastered by his passion, when he is his indignation, a righteous wrath incarnate, neither narrow, nor human, a burning fire for which his whole nature is but fuel—that fury of the whirlwind which men have made their type of spirit—then he is terrible and great. Or, again, when a man stands before you erect and self-restrained, with anger in his eyes, and resolution in the lines of his quiet mouth, measuring his words, ruling his wrath, smiling if need be, and, if need be, listening, (which is more,) he too is terrible. Who knows the depth of his indignation? Who can say how long it may last? For aught we can tell, there may be an eternity of anger behind his calm face. It was to be feared that Sissy might hardly be reassured by Percival's gentleness.

He went indoors, and sat opposite his grandfather, who watched him, as he ate and drank, with a happy air of proprietorship. Percival thrust all his troubles into the background, and was willing to enjoy himself. Since his life was after a fashion stunted and spoiled, it was well that the cookery was good, and the wine chosen with especial reference to his taste. The Squire too was discoursing pleasantly enough of Prior's Hurst, and what might be done to improve the house, with pictures and old china. "You ought to have all the family portraits," said Godfrey Thorne; "as the head of the house it would be only right." Percival smiled, neither assenting nor refusing, but a little perplexed. It did seem to him right that he should have them. Surely such a legacy would prove to all the neighbourhood that his father had done nothing amiss, when, in his old quarrel with the Squire, he held to his word, and his heart, and Sarah Percival. But at the same time it pained him to think that he should rob Brackenhill.

"Listen," said his grandfather abruptly, "don't you hear wheels?"

Percival nodded, emptied his glass, and went to the window. "I can see them—they will be here directly."

"Just in time for a glass of wine after their drive," said Mr. Thorne.

The young man looked at his watch. "I must be off very soon," he said. "It's the last train and I must not miss it. Send some wine for Sissy into the drawing-room. I want a little talk with her."

His grandfather hesitated, looking up at him. "You are not going to be——" he began, and stopped.

Percival completed the sentence with perfect calmness, "Hard on Sissy? Certainly not."

"Go into the drawing-room," said the Squire with alacrity. "How surprised she will be! I will send her to you."

There was no time for consideration, and the matter was not worth arguing. Percival went into the drawing-room, crossing the hall as the wheels were heard crushing the gravel just outside. He opened the first book that came to hand, and read a line or two. It was impossible in those brief moments to go over his decision again, so he put it aside as a thing irrevocable, and leant over the page and read—

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run,
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;
She had no knowledge when the day was done,
And the new morn she saw not——

The door opened, and he lifted himself with a studiously quiet face. But it was George with his tray, a long-necked decanter on it and some slender-stemmed glasses. Percival dropped on his elbow again, with a half smile at his own discomfiture, and made another attempt at reading. But George had hardly found a clear space for his burden, and Percival had only managed

O leave the palm to wither by itself;
Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour!

when Sissy appeared in the doorway, with a questioning face. It brightened into sudden gladness, and she flew half across the room, like a butterfly. Her hand was outstretched, but she uttered no word because of George, who stood aside to let her pass, as he went out. Then she lagged—then she stood still, a few paces from Percival, looking up into his eyes.

"Percival—you know!" she said.

"Ah, Sissy—and you know," he answered, with a gentle emphasis.

Her hand had dropped by her side. Had she held it out to him he would have taken it, but she was afraid. He turned to the table, and filled a glass of wine, which she accepted, because in taking it her fingers might brush his. The touch gave her courage.

"Are you angry!" she asked, putting the untasted wine on the table by her side.

He shook his head. "No."

"Then you are worse than angry—what is it? I was always afraid," she said desperately. "And yet—O Percival—it was for you!"

"Ah, that's the worst of it," he answered. "A lie—and for me! And Horace?"

"Don't!" She had lifted her hands, and let them fall again. "I don't want to think about Horace—I don't like to look at him—I don't want him to touch me—I can't bear it when he smiles at me! He doesn't smile at me so often now, and somehow I can't bear that either. But he has no right to everything; you have the right; you are the heir. When I couldn't go to sleep at night for thinking, I used to say to myself, It is all to do justice."

"Justice! My God!" said Percival, and there was a pause. "What made you think of it first?" he said. "How came you to tell my grandfather it was Horace who was away that evening? He says you knew it was important. But—perhaps you didn't understand?"

He offered her this loophole of escape. "Is it possible?" he questioned with lips and eyes. Had she taken advantage of it he would have had a moment of rapture, and a lifetime of doubt.

"Oh, I understood," said Sissy, looking down. "But you didn't want him to know where you had been, did you? You said not. And I thought I had only to say 'Horace' and it would be all right. How was I to know it would be so bad afterwards?"

"So bad afterwards?"

"Yes. I was always afraid to open my lips, for fear it should come out. I locked my door every night, lest I should talk in my sleep, and Aunt Harriet should come in. I was afraid of her—and afraid of Uncle Thorne lest he should scold me, and afraid of Horace, when he came back ill, lest he should say a kind word to me. And afraid of Godfrey Hammond. And of you."

"Why of me?"

"Lest you should be angry."

"I am not angry," said Percival. "At least I think not. I am sorry and I am startled. I thought we two were one, and that you loved me, and all the time you never understood me, I suppose, and I never understood you. You wanted to help me—with a lie. It is strange. And only three weeks from being man and wife," he added, in a half soliloquy. "Did you think I should never find out anything about it, Sissy?"

"I hoped it might be a long time, a very long time first. And then, if I were not braver and stronger, as I hoped I might be—then—one day—if I were very tired—I thought—perhaps"—

"My God!" said Percival again, as if he recoiled from a dimly seen abyss. "When it might be too late to make any amends, or when I mightn't have the strength to do it—might acquiesce in the lie, and live in it!"

"You shouldn't be angry with me," Sissy exclaimed suddenly. "For it's worse to murder people than to say what isn't true—now isn't it? And you say that Charlotte Corday was noble, and Jael, and——"

"What, you wanted to be a heroine, and for me?" said Percival. "You might have spared yourself the trouble, Sissy; I don't feel the least like a hero. Charlotte Corday would not have thought much of me, I fancy. Why are those women always in your head? I never said Charlotte Corday was my ideal. Charlotte Corday—oh, poor child, you don't understand! She earned the guillotine, and we were to earn—Brackenhill!"

"It wasn't for Brackenhill," said Sissy.

"No, it was for me—I know it. But Horace—ah, well, it is no use thinking of it now. He will have his rights, thank God; it is not too late. And I shall have a home for you, not so grand as this, but you will not mind that. And we must try what we can do to understand each other better in our new life, dear. Only always be true, Sissy. Be true for my sake. No, I won't say that, for truth isn't really truth for anything but its own sake. But you will remember that there is no chance of happiness for us unless we are both true. See what pain this gives us! And, Sissy, I have been deceived right and left. If I could only feel that I might trust you—I am not asking for a promise, but you will think of it perhaps—and that you would trust me in all our lives to come!"

"Don't talk about the time to come," said Sissy. "What is the use? Nor about the time past. It has been very terrible, but now it is all over."

To Percival it had only just begun. "All over?" he repeated, and looked at her in stern surprise.

"Yes," said Sissy. "Oh, there may be worse—I don't know—but there can't be *that* any more. I shall never go about again thinking: 'If anyone finds out!' If Percival is angry! and feeling cold and burning all at once. Oh, I am tired! I wonder if I shall sleep now."

She looked up at him. He stood, statue-like, with his eyes upon her.

"It is worse," she went on, "and yet it is better, for it is done. I'm like that man in the Bible—what was his name?—Agag—you know what he said?"

"Surely the bitterness of death is past.' Was that what you meant?"

"Yes, that is just it. It is all over, and something else is over too."

"What is that?"

"All between you and me, for ever."

Percival stepped back in blank astonishment. Her words startled him, as if a sudden flash of lightning had come out of a pink and white bindweed blossom. "Sissy! You do not mean that!"

"I do! I do! It must be so—don't be angry with me, Percival! I can't help it, I know I promised, but you will set me free!"

He was amazed and bewildered, but as he stood, with his brows drawn down, and his dark eyes questioning her, he looked the tragic hero to the life. It might have been a picture or a play, with that quaint old room for the scene, and, in the foreground, the lady slight, delicate, and pleading, the cavalier stern and statuesque. She had her hands upon his sleeve—little hands with sparkling rings, and lace falling softly about the white arms.

"Set you free! You don't suppose I would keep you to your word, if your heart didn't go with it! Not if it cost me—Sissy, tell me, was I harsh to you?"

"No! A thousand times no! Perhaps if you had been—but you do not understand, and if I don't understand you, Percival, it would be terrible. Don't you see that it would be terrible—that it can't be?"

"Life is long, isn't it?" said young Thorne. "We might learn."

"No," said Sissy, "I am afraid. I dare not try. Oh, Percival, I'm not fit for you. I was never sure till now, though I was afraid, but now I *am* sure. Don't persuade me, I should go with you, and my heart would break. If we were alone together always, I think I should die!"

"Sissy!" deeply wounded.

"Oh, you would be kind! I know it. But while you spoke so gently just now, I could see in your eyes——"

"Yes!" Percival was guarding the expression of his face.

"That you were angry, and pained, and disgusted all the time."

"Not disgusted—Sissy!"

"Well then, you looked as if you were far above it all, though you wouldn't say one hard word, because I didn't understand, and you meant to be good to me. No, I don't understand *now*, for somehow I feel as if I had been truest of all just then!"

The little clock on the chimney-piece struck seven, and startled Percival, reminding him that his time was very short.

"Then, Sissy," he stepped forward as he spoke, "is it that you do not love me?"

"You are too good for me," she faltered. "I don't understand you—you said it yourself. Oh, Percival, don't be angry with me; we shouldn't be happy. Let me go." There was frightened earnestness in her voice.

Not love him? She loved him as much as ever—more if possible. He was always perfection in her eyes,—a prince—a hero—an archangel. But it must be allowed that to spend a lifetime with a grieved and indignant archangel would not be a reassuring prospect. Sissy's heart died within her at the intolerable thought. She had groped in the dark after the ideal she had fancied was his, and conformed to it, and had made herself the thing he hated. Not love him? Until that moment it seemed to her that she had never fully understood her love for him, but with love rose fear, like an irresistible torrent, and swept her from his side. There was nothing good in the whole world, except the companionship which would be more unendurable than all.

"And is this to be the end?" said Percival, at last.

It was an end of which he had never dreamed. He had been as confident of her clinging tenderness, as of his own protecting devotion. Nay, more so, for he had feared he could not give his heart, true though it was, so utterly and unreservedly as Sissy gave hers. He might chafe and fret at the perplexities of his life, but he had never for a moment thought that the bond between them could be severed. It was a November night when he read her love for him in her frightened eyes, and stooped to kiss her lips. And now they had reached the sweet May month, which blossomed with the last graces and tenderness of courtship, ere June should come with its riper and warmer beauty, and their wedding day for its crown. And, through the gliding weeks, their two lives had been growing together, with no thought of such an hour as this. Percival forgot his disapprobation, his tone of gentle yet studied rebuke; he remembered only that he wanted Sissy, and that he was on the verge of losing her. "Is this to be the end?" he said.

"Yes," said Sissy, hanging her head; "only *don't* be angry."

"All over in a moment—Sissy, I can't believe it—it isn't possible. Are you in earnest, really in earnest?"

"Yes," said Sissy.

"I am to go away—for ever?"

"Ye-es," said Sissy, with a little quiver in her voice, but unabated resolution in the carriage of her averted head.

There was again a moment's pause. Percival walked slowly to the other end of the room, came back, and halted exactly in front of her. "Sissy, you must forgive me if I weary you, but I have only a moment. Is this decision of yours so absolutely fixed that I can do *nothing* to change it?"

"Yes," said Sissy.

"Then of course you are free. And—good-bye, Sissy!"

"Percival!" said the Squire, tapping lightly on the door, "Percival! that dog-cart of yours has just come round. Sorry to disturb you, my boy, but—"

"Thanks—I'll come," said young Thorne. He would have given much for another ten minutes, but he must go at once or he could not leave Brackenhill at all that night. "And I can't be here to-morrow," he thought. "Horace would think I was scheming something underhand with the governor's will. Besides, I can't face them all now—that fearful Mrs. James, too!—and tell them—Sissy, are we to part like this?"

"No!" She turned to him suddenly, and her great eyes were yearning, and brimmed with tears, in the delicate little blossom of her face. He opened his arms, and she sprang to him, kissed him, clung to him, her burning blushes were hot against his olive cheek, and the next moment she had repulsed him, and torn herself away. "Sissy!" cried Percival, "by heaven, it shall be all unsaid and undone! Not another word of this folly——"

"That was good-bye," she said; "good-bye for always, Percival. And—and you didn't kiss me, you know, when I came in—before I said——"

The Squire outside was envying them their youth and love, and the happy anguish of their brief parting. But with his envy he combined a careful study of the minute hand of his watch. It was progressing so rapidly as to suggest the idea that a Liberal government had somehow got into the works.

"Percival, my dear boy, if you *must* go by this train, there isn't a minute to lose!"

"Go!" said Sissy; "it is much the best. I shall tell them, and I shall say it was all my doing, and all my fault." And she fled by the opposite door.

"Sissy!" he called after her, but she was gone. For one moment he stood, irresolute, glancing from door to door, and then he dashed out into the hall. His haste, and the gathering dusk, spared him any question or scrutiny. He bade the old Squire a hurried farewell, and ran down the steps.

"Your overcoat is in," the Squire called after him, as Percival swung himself up by the driver's side; "and I will see that all is made right—to-morrow."

"Thank you," Percival replied, waving his hand, and remembering, with an effort, that it was Prior's Hurst that was meant.

The old man watched the dog-cart as it rattled down the avenue, and, even when it had disappeared, he listened to the far-off sound of the departing wheels. "I think the boy looked strange," he said to himself. "It may be only my fancy, but I think he did." And he never once looked back. Then he turned away, and the footman, who had been discreetly waiting in the background, came forward and closed the big door with a heavy sound, which went through Sissy Langton's heart. She had stolen into the drawing-room again. There was the chair he had set for her, there was the glass of wine he had poured out for her. Sissy could not endure to think that George might come in and drink that wine, it would be profanation. She touched it with her lips, but she was sure that she could not swallow it, it would choke her. She carried it to the window, and, leaning out into the sweet stillness of the May twilight, she poured it at the root of the white jasmine. As it soaked into the earth she fancied for the moment that it looked as if she had shed her heart's blood on the terrace, where she and Percival had so often walked together. Coming back to the table, she set the glass down, looked round, and saw an open book. Instantly she recalled Percival's attitude, how he leant on his elbow and read, and lifted himself to greet her as she came in, and she caught up the volume. There was a step outside, and she fled with her treasure to her own room. There she hung over it, as Isabella over her sweet Basil on that very leaf. She put no mark to keep the place, but if anyone studies Keats from that copy,

he will find that the book falls open there, and that the creamy smoothness of the page is dimmed in many places.

And Percival was being whirled through the cool dusk, further and further away. "I will see that all is made right—to-morrow," the Squire had said in his innocence, and the young man's lips wore a bitter little smile. What could to-morrow do for him? There are some to-days which to-morrow cannot heal, unless perhaps it is a to-morrow which is very far away.

"We shall do it, sir," said the driver, and his anxious face relaxed into an easier expression. "Yes, we shall do it now, for certain. It was a closish shave, but the old horse has come along uncommon well."

Thorne started from his reverie, and put money into his hand. As he slipped it into his pocket the man glanced at it and touched his hat. The transaction pleased him very well. He didn't understand why young gents always would cut it so uncommonly close, but it was a way they had, and he preferred them to ladies who liked to be in time, and wished to know his fare.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BROKEN OFF.

PERCIVAL had expected that when he journeyed to town that night the Old Man of the Sea would be on his shoulders. But when the time came he never thought of the Old Man of the Sea at all. His thoughts were of Sissy, and they were disjointed, contradictory, and powerless. How could he tell what to think? It seemed to him that he had never known her till that day. At one moment he would say to himself that he had taken her at her word too hastily. And indeed, what she had said did not amount to much, but for one thing. She had implied that she was *frightened* at the idea of becoming his wife, and her eyes had told her fear even more plainly than her words. Afraid—but of what? For she had warmly declared her certainty that he would be good. Percival felt as if he had somehow caught a slender, trembling, wild creature, which cowered at his approach, and was doubly scared at every attempt at friendliness. And he had fancied that he could shelter and guard her! He was cut to the heart to think that Sissy should be afraid of him. If she had defended herself, if she had reproached him, and been angry when he had blamed her, it would not have pained him, as did her terrified entreaties to be set free from his love. It was like a stab when he recalled her anxious eyes. Yet—if he could not make her happy—and since perhaps they did not understand each other—might it not be better—in days far off—? Percival threw himself back and folded his arms. "What's the use of thinking? I must just drift as usual."

But he could not help thinking. When he reached his rooms again he found a parcel of books and maps which he had ordered, that he

might plan his wedding tour, so that no fancy of Sissy's should be unfulfilled. Near it lay another parcel from his tailor, and a letter from a sailor friend, who had just heard of the approaching marriage and wrote to congratulate him. Percival thrust everything aside, and sat musing in his arm-chair, till utter weariness drove him to bed.

Just at the same time Aunt Harriet was trying to get a little rest. But she was burdened with the weight of Sissy's tidings that it was all over, that her engagement was broken off, and that it was all her own fault, not Percival's. She would not say what was wrong, she was so tired she could not be scolded then. Only it wasn't Percival. He was good. But it could never, never be; she could not bear it; it would break her heart. "Thank goodness," thought Aunt Harriet, "the poor child has sobbed herself to sleep, and to-morrow may bring counsel. I can't think what can be amiss. I'll not say anything to Godfrey yet. Broken off—why it's impossible! The people are asked to the breakfast, and the presents, too—there *must* be some horrible mistake! I'll find out to-morrow; but, oh dear, oh dear, just when I was so worried with the dressmaker and all. And I'm too old to set lovers' quarrels right—they are a generation too far away from me. I know it is Percival's doing somehow; I never could feel as if I quite understood him. Oh, if it could but have been Horace, my own dear boy! If he had come home strong and well, and they had liked each other, I should have had nothing left to wish for. Oh Horace! Horace!" and the old lady floated to a melancholy dreamland, very much as Sissy had done, only that her tears flowed in a tired acquiescence, instead of in a passion of despair.

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